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LECTURES

UPON THE

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST THREE CENTURIES,

FROM THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST,
TO THE YEAR 313.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE history contained in the present volume being written on the same plan with that in the preceding, there is not much occasion for any prefatory remarks. The name of *Lectures* has been continued through the whole of the volume, though the latter part of it has not been orally delivered. Some chronological tables have been added at the end, which will perhaps be found of use. The first contains the principal events in the history of the church for the first three centuries; or rather, from the birth of Christ to the year 313. The connexion of these dates with the reigns of the different Roman emperors is also given; and upon minute points of chronology in Roman history, the authority of Pagi has generally been followed. The second table contains the names of the bishops of the

four principal sees, Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria, together with the dates of their appointments. In this table the chronology of Eusebius is principally followed, though in the history reasons are sometimes given for preferring more modern calculations. The reader will however see in this series the opinion entertained by Eusebius, and probably by all persons in his day, concerning the chronological succession of these bishops. The names of the bishops of Jerusalem, who succeeded each other very rapidly, are preserved by Eusebius; but he acknowledges himself ignorant of the periods during which many of them held the bishopric. These dates are therefore given by conjecture in the above-mentioned table; but the nature of the case precludes any error from extending to more than the space of two or three years.

LECTURE XIII.

IT has been usual with the writers of ecclesiastical history to divide their work according to the centuries of the Christian era. The division may appear at first not unnatural, and may serve in some respects to assist the memory. It has however its disadvantages: and, like other historical divisions, which depend upon dates rather than upon facts, it must often terminate a period, while several subjects which have been handled remain unfinished. I do not therefore intend to adhere rigidly to the division of centuries. My former Lectures were upon the ecclesiastical history of the first century, and the present course will embrace the second century. It will however be found convenient to pay some attention to the periods which are marked by the reigns of the Roman emperors. These have not any necessary connexion with the centuries of the Christian era: and, since the death of Commodus happened eight years before the end of the second century, I shall continue the present Lectures to the death of Severus, which carries us into the twelfth year of the third century.

There is perhaps no part of ecclesiastical history, which admits so readily of these artificial divisions, as that which I considered in my former Lectures. The first century has, not improperly, been termed

the apostolic age. It is true, as I before observed, that we know little of the history of the apostles during the last thirty years of that century; and there is reason to believe, that nearly all the Apostles were withdrawn from their earthly labours soon after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul. It is however certain, that St. John survived to the beginning of the second century: and, so long as one Apostle remained to watch over the Christian church, we are justified in speaking of that as the apostolic age. The death of St. John, which thus becomes an epoch in the history of the church, belongs properly to the second century: and my former Lectures might have ended either with that event, or with the accession of Trajan, which happened in the year 98, and thus coincides very nearly with the end of the first century.

The latter years of St. John's life were passed in Asia Minor: and this part of his history makes us acquainted with two facts, one of which is as gratifying as the other is painful. We learn, that the Gospel had made rapid progress, and that churches, or large communities of Christians, with bishops at their head, were regularly established in the principal cities of that country: but we learn also, that the heathen had begun that system of persecution, which continued for more than two centuries to harass the followers of Christ. The rapid progress, and the regular establishment of Christianity, were not confined to Asia Minor. In Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Italy, there were several churches, which were already rising into some importance: and the names of those bishops, who connect the apostolical age with that immediately

following, deserve a prominent place in the ecclesiastical history of the second century.

I have spoken of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, both of whom are said to have received their appointment from St. John, and who seem certainly to have held their respective sees at the time of that Apostle's death. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, had either been personally acquainted with St. John, or had seen persons who had conversed with several of the Apostles^a: and it is probable that he was at this time in possession of his bishopric. The see of Ephesus was held a few years later by Onesimus, concerning whose early history we know nothing certain. Symeon, the brother or cousin of our Lord, was still bishop of Jerusalem: and Cerdon, the third bishop of Alexandria after St. Mark, is said to have succeeded Abilius in the first year of Trajan^b. If we turn to the western churches, we shall see reason to think, that those of Athens and Corinth had a regular succession of bishops from the time of their being founded by St. Paul. Concerning Dionysius the Areopagite, and his being bishop of Athens, though the evidence of this fact is respectable, I can only repeat the doubts, which were before expressed; and it is difficult to believe, that a person who was converted by St. Paul, was martyred in the reign of Hadrian^c. He may however have lived to the

^a Irenæus calls him "a hearer of John," V. xxxiii. 4. though his own words, as quoted by Eusebius, *H. E.* III. 39. might lead us to think that he had not conversed with any of the Apostles. See Pagi, *ad Baron.* an. 118. Orsi, *Istor. Eccles.*

vol. II. p. 51. Grabe, *Spicileg. Sæc. II.* p. 26.

^b Eus. *H. E.* III. 21. Chron.

^c This is asserted by Ado, who quotes Aristides, an Athenian writer of that day. If Dionysius was only twenty at the time of his conversion, he

beginning of the second century : and the tradition of his having received an epistle from Polycarp^d, is perhaps entitled to credit. The island of Crete had probably at this time more than one church with a bishop at its head^e : but the chief place in the European churches was naturally given to Rome, the seat of empire, and the capital of the world. I have mentioned the uncertainty which attends the chronology of the early bishops of Rome. Eusebius and Jerom speak of Clement filling that station at the time of the death of St. John ; and they place the death of Clement in the year 100, the third year of Trajan. The story of his banishment to the Tauric Chersonesus, and of his martyrdom, is not supported by credible authority. Clement was succeeded by Evarestus, who would thus deserve to be noticed, as being head of the Roman church at the beginning of the second century : but those writers, who adopt a shorter scheme of chronology, suppose that Evarestus had already been succeeded by Alexander, and Alexander by Xystus. It is sufficient to mention this difference of opinion, and to state that the succession of the Roman bishops, through the whole of the second century, is involved in obscurity.

There is one question which it is impossible to pass over in a work of this kind, and which naturally presents itself at the present period, after the mention of those persons who presided over the church in the age following the apostolic. I allude

was ninety-one in the first year of Hadrian. In Lecture VI. page 183, I have mentioned the tradition of his being martyred in the reign of Domitian.

^d Suidas, v. *Polycarp*.

^e In the reign of M. Aurelius we find bishops of Gortyna, Gnossus, and other dioceses. Eus. *II. E.* IV. 23.

to the continuance of miraculous powers; and the opinions which have been entertained upon this subject, may perhaps be reduced to three. The Romanists maintain, that the power of working miracles has never ceased, but that it is exercised in the true church at the present day. Sceptical writers, and some zealous protestants, have contended, that miracles wholly ceased, when the Apostles were withdrawn from the world. Lastly, it has been held as a middle course between these two extremes, that miracles became less frequent after the time of the Apostles, till they gradually died away altogether. This last opinion, which agrees with what we might naturally expect to be the case, is also supported by the positive testimony of the early ecclesiastical writers. It has been asserted, that the evidence of the continuance of miraculous powers is equally strong at every period, from the second century to the present day; and this remark is made, that those persons, who disbelieve the miracles of the Romish church, may be compelled also to reject every evidence of this kind. But nothing is more certain, than that this assertion is wholly unsupported by facts. It is true, that in the fourth century, an extraordinary number of stupendous miracles is reported to have been worked; but it is equally true, though the fact seems almost to be forgotten, that the writers of the second and third centuries speak expressly of miracles having become less frequent, and of only some faint traces of them remaining in their own day. This is not the language of men, who countenanced pious frauds, or who wished to put their own powers upon a level with those of the Apostles. We in fact find very

little mention of miracles in the third century : and if we believe the writers, who say that miracles had then almost ceased, we may give some credit to those who speak of their occurring occasionally in the second century.

Such is the state of the question, as it is collected from the positive testimony of the early writers : and so far as the subject of miracles is open to abstract reasoning, we should come to the same conclusion. If we argue from analogy, we may perhaps say, that God would not work a miracle without a sufficient cause : and though the sufficiency of the cause can hardly be decided by human reason, we may conclude, that if, under certain circumstances, a miracle has been worked, a similar cause may possibly call forth a similar effect. Now it will not be denied, that God enabled the Apostles and other persons to work miracles in the first century for the propagation of the Gospel. The heathen saw the interference of God, and their reason told them that God would not interfere for a religion which was false. We might therefore conclude, that so long as the evidence of miracles was wanted for the conversion of the heathen, God would enable miracles to be worked : and for man to attempt to fix the time, when such miraculous evidence became superfluous, appears to me far too presumptuous a stretch of human reason. It will not be contended, that the church required less assistance from above when the presence of the Apostles was withdrawn : and if it be said, that this argument would prove too much, and that we ought therefore to expect more miracles in the second century than in the first, I answer, that, without any presumptuous

speculations, we may find an obvious reason for miracles becoming gradually less frequent. As the Gospel spread, and was embraced by men, who demonstrated its truth by their writings, we are warranted from analogy in saying that there was less need of miraculous interference: but this is very different from saying that there was no need of such interference at all: and though the Gospel might be left to the usual methods of demonstration in Ephesus or Rome, it does not follow that preternatural aid was not wanted for its confirmation in Persia or Gaul.

There is a difficulty, which appears to me insuperable, in supposing miracles to have ceased altogether at the end of the apostolic age. It seems indeed absurd to say that the very day and hour of their cessation could be known; which would be the case, upon this hypothesis, with those persons who witnessed the death of the Apostle St. John: and this would be to make miracles depend, not upon the necessity of the case, but upon an event which was entirely contingent. Nor is this the whole of the difficulty. If the Apostles had been the only persons who worked miracles, it would necessarily have followed that miracles ceased, when the last of the Apostles died. But it is notorious that the Apostles communicated these miraculous powers to others. The *spiritual gifts*, as they are called in the New Testament, were possessed by many members even of the same church^f. It is probable, that these gifts became less frequent, because they were less needed, before the end of the

^f See Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.* II. 4. p. 96.

first century: but if we say that they ceased altogether, we must either conclude, that they were imparted to no persons who survived St. John, or that all the persons who possessed them, were suddenly deprived of them, when that Apostle died. It is scarcely possible to read of the profusion, with which St. Paul distributed these gifts to his Corinthian converts, and to doubt whether St. John imparted them to Ignatius or Polycarp: but if these men, who were bishops of extensive churches, possessed miraculous power before the death of St. John, it is most irrational to suppose that the power was dependent upon that Apostle's life. We shall see presently, from the most credible evidence, that these apostolical fathers, as they are justly called, did actually possess this miraculous power: but I am now endeavouring to shew, from the very nature of the case, that some persons must have been alive at the beginning of the second century, who had received spiritual gifts from the hands of the Apostles.

It seems therefore utterly impossible to fix any precise period for the cessation of miracles. The notion is as contrary to analogy as to history. The arguments advanced above would lead us to expect, that miracles had become less frequent even in the first century. I would not deny, that they were of very rare occurrence in the second century: but whoever studies the history of the church at these two periods, will pause before he decides that the Gospel had no need of miraculous interference after the death of the Apostles.

I have already quoted the authority of Irenæus for saying that St. John lived to the time of Trajan.

That emperor began his reign in the year 98 : and it seems most probable, that St. John died in 99, at a very advanced age^g. We learn from his own words^h, that a report was circulated that he was not to die : and we have perhaps another reason for assigning a late date to his Gospel, when we find him anxious to correct this mistaken expectation. It appears, however, that he did not altogether succeed in removing the error : and even so late as the fourth century there were persons who believed that he was still alive ; or, if his body was laid in the grave, that he was only asleep, and that he would reappear at the end of the world with Moses and Eliasⁱ. I shall not repeat what I have remarked concerning the different state of the church in the first century, when it was under the guidance of the Apostles, and its condition in the second century, when it was left to the care of ordinary teachers. The distinction must not be pressed too closely, when we are surveying the whole of the country, which as yet had been visited by the Gospel. The inhabitants of Asia Minor must have felt that their loss was irreparable, when the mortal remains of St. John were laid in his grave at Ephesus : but there were other places where the Gospel was established, and where the presence of an Apostle had not been seen for several years. Some of these churches were under the care of bishops, who received their appointment from the Apostles : and if

A. D.
98.

^g See Dodwell, *Addit. ad Pearsoni Diss.* II. c. 5. p. 178.

^h John xxi. 23.

ⁱ Hippolytus, *de Mundi Consumm.* Augustin. in *Joan.* tract. cxxiv. 2. Nicephorus

gives a detailed account of his death, (II. 42.) which cannot be received as authentic. See Baronius ad an. 101. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. I. p. 946.

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98.

the remarks made above have any weight, there were still occasionally preternatural interpositions, which assisted the progress of the Gospel, and compensated in some measure for the removal of the Apostles. These persons, however, who are called by early writers "the first successors of the Apostles^k," were gradually taken away by death: and if the received chronology is correct, the death of Clement, bishop of Rome, who had been a fellow-labourer of St. Paul, was a memorable though melancholy event in the history which we are now considering. I have stated that he died, and was succeeded by Evarestus in the year 100, which was the year following the death of St. John, and the second of the reign of Trajan.

This emperor was in his forty-second year when he was called to the throne by the death of Nerva in the beginning of the year 98. He was by birth a Spaniard, and his life had been passed in constant military service in different parts of the world. Concerning his earlier years we know nothing which was likely to have brought him into contact with the Christians. His father served under Vespasian and Titus in the Jewish war, and held the rank of tribune during part of those campaigns^l; but the son, who was only sixteen years old at the time of the taking of Jerusalem, was not likely to have interested himself in questions of religion, even if his father had related to him any facts of Jewish or Christian superstition. Baronius supposes, that another officer, who served in the Jewish war, and who afterwards

^k Eus. *H. E.* II. 23; III. 4. ^l Joseph. *De Bell. Jud.* III. 37. See Dodwell, *Diss. ad* 7, 31; 9, 8.
Iren. I. 9. p. 17.

suffered martyrdom as a Christian, was personally known to Trajan. This was Placidus, who commanded under the emperor, and gained much distinction in the first Dacian campaign in the year 101: but whether he was the same person who was martyred in the first year of Hadrian, must be considered doubtful^m.

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It may be supposed that Nerva, when he adopted Trajan, saw something in his mind which was congenial with his own, and Nerva was certainly not disposed to cruelty. I have mentioned the edict which he issued at the commencement of his reign for the return of all exiles, and that St. John availed himself of this permission to return to Ephesus. The edict was in fact favourable to the Christians, and put a stop to their persecution. His reign unfortunately was short; but if Trajan was led to copy him in his political measures, he was likely to discourage those about him who would have used force against the Christians. The news of Nerva's death reached him at Cologne, and he remained in Germany the whole of that year; but he wrote letters to the senate, and among other declarations he promised that no command of his should inflict death or disgrace upon any person of good character. The historian adds, that he kept this promise inviolate through the whole of his reignⁿ: but it is needless to remark, that a pledge of this kind would by no means have restrained a Roman magistrate from punishing a Christian; and the expression was perhaps only taken to mean, that no senator should be put to death. Another declaration, which he made

^m Baronius ad an. 103, num. IV: an. 120, num. VI.

ⁿ Dio, LXVIII. 5. p. 1122.

A. D. 98. in these letters to the senate, was likely to lead more directly to attacks upon the Christians. He expressed himself strongly attached to the national religion, as handed down from their ancestors^o; and a person in office, who acted upon this principle, might have felt it a duty to persecute the Christians without being naturally inclined to cruelty. There is however no evidence that this result took place during the absence of Trajan from Rome in the first year of his reign. A persecution is mentioned by some writers^p, in which Flavia Domitilla, and the other exiles, who had been recalled by the edict of Nerva, suffered martyrdom: but the fact does not seem to rest upon sufficient evidence.

A. D. 99. In the following year Trajan visited Rome, and a severe law was passed against any persons who were convicted of bringing an unjust accusation. The trade of informer (*delatores*) had often received marks of public disapprobation; and we may perhaps infer from the present law, that it had lately been carried on with some activity. It is probable, however, that neither the emperor nor his advisers were led to make this law by any wish to protect the Christians: it may in some measure have had that effect; and their enemies may in future have indulged in a less frequent and less vexatious system of persecution; but when we read that those persons, who had distinguished themselves as informers, were sent in banishment to the islands^q, we are not to infer that the punishment was intended for those who had been the means of sending the Christians to the same places of exile. Among the other acts

^o Plin. *Panegy.*

^p See Baronius ad an. 100.

^q Plin. *Panegy.* 34.

of Trajan, upon his taking possession of the empire, we find him giving to his predecessor Nerva a place in the list of deities; but such acts as these will not allow us to draw any inference as to his religious feelings: the apotheosis of Nerva was made a subject of panegyric and flattery to Trajan^r; but the policy was so obvious, and the custom so regularly established, that we cannot charge it upon the emperor as a special act of superstition; nor can we say whether he would be more likely to persecute the Christians, because he paid this attention to the established religion of his country. It is possible that the introduction of a new deity may have exposed the Christians to some molestation, since their refusal to sacrifice in the name of the emperor was a common ground of complaint against them, and one which was likely to be put forward at the commencement of a new reign. We are told also, that earthquakes, famines, and pestilences were felt at this period in several parts of the world; and this furnished another topic of invective against the Christians, who were supposed to call down the anger of Heaven by their apostasy from the national faith. It appears therefore that there were circumstances in the two first years of Trajan's reign, which were likely to excite opposition to the Gospel: but I repeat, that we have no authentic account of any specific persecution; and I have already stated, that the banishment and death of Clement, which are assigned by some writers to the two first years of Trajan's reign, do not rest upon sufficient evidence.

There is however too good reason to believe, that

^r Plin. *Panegy.* 11.

- A. D. 99. not many years of Trajan's reign had passed away, when a series of attacks was made upon the Christians in the eastern part of the empire. The emperor himself may be supposed to have known little or nothing of these transactions. His first Dacian campaign began in the year 101 or 102, and some years elapsed before the country was finally reduced by the defeat and death of Decebalus. The year
- A. D. 104. 104 seems to furnish the most probable date for the martyrdom of Symeon, the second bishop of Jerusalem. He had succeeded his brother James in the year 62, and had witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, when there can be little doubt that he fled with the Christians to Pella. It seems equally certain, that he returned afterwards with some of them to Jerusalem^s: and he could not have held his office for so many years, if he had not possessed ability and discretion, as well as activity and zeal. We know little of the civil history of the Jews during that period. They had ceased to give any uneasiness to the Romans: and as many as escaped the siege and its consequences seem to have been allowed to settle once more in the ruins of Jerusalem, or in the neighbouring towns. This indulgence was perhaps owing in some measure to the prudence of Agrippa, who from the death of his father in 44 had contrived to obtain favours from every Roman emperor in succession. This good fortune did not desert him even after the ruin of his country; and we read of his receiving donations of territory from Vespasian and Domitian. It seems probable that he died in the reign of the latter, about the year 91^t:

^s See Orsi, *Istoria Ecclesiastica*, vol. II. p. 19.

^t Baratier, *de Success. Episc. Rom.* Append. Diss. IV.

and though it is impossible to suppose, that his attention was not excited by the progress of the Gospel, there is nothing handed down to us, after his conference with St. Paul in the presence of Festus, which connects his name in any manner with the Christians.

A. D.
104.

The insignificance of the Jews as a people, and the absence of any thing like political power, could not fail to be favourable to the church at Jerusalem : and we have the authority of Hegesippus^u, who wrote in the second century, for saying that the church enjoyed profound peace, while Symeon was bishop of Jerusalem. His words leave it rather uncertain, whether he referred to a period before or after the persecution in the time of Domitian : nor do we know how far that emperor's cruelty affected the Christians at Jerusalem. I have mentioned that some of the descendants of the Apostle Jude were examined in the presence of Domitian concerning their descent from David ; and we are told that the firmness which they shewed under that trial, and their relationship to Jesus Christ, caused them to be appointed to prominent stations in the church. The period of peace alluded to above seems to have continued to the death of Symeon, which happened most probably, as I have already stated, in the year 104. The same jealousy concerning the persons descended from David was the cause of his martyrdom : and he was put forward as an object of persecution by the same persons who had before directed their malice against the descendants of Jude. Hegesippus says, that it was owing to certain heretics, and we have later authority^x for naming the Ceri-

^u Apud Eus. *H. E.* III. 20. 32.

^x Chron. Alexandr.

A. D. thians and Nicolaitans. This however must be con-
104. sidered uncertain; and it is difficult to say, whether
this attack upon the Christians is to be traced to
their earliest and bitterest enemies the Jews, or
whether it was owing to the Gnostics, who were
now spreading their doctrines more rapidly, and
who mixed up with them a considerable portion of
Jewish opinions.

It is to be wished, that we knew more concerning
the curious and interesting fact of inquiry being
made in Judæa after the descendants of David. It
seems probable, that the investigation was not di-
rected at first against the Christians. As the popu-
lation of Jerusalem increased after its being reoccu-
pied, the jealousy and suspicions of the Roman go-
vernment may have revived. We know from what
happened a few years later in the reign of Hadrian,
that the Jews were still liable to be acted upon by
the pretensions of a leader sent from heaven: and it
might be conjectured, that when the Romans inter-
fered in cases of this kind, the people found it expe-
dient to turn the attention of their conquerors to the
Christians. I have observed, that up to this time
the Christians were confounded with the Jews: and
when the Romans began to take more notice of the
popular expectation, that a deliverer was to appear
of the line of David, the Christians may have been
falsely represented as the chief believers in this tra-
dition. It was known, that the Christians would
rather die than renounce their belief in the Son of
David; the person, whom they acknowledged as their
head, was a descendant of David: and while the
Romans were thus made to look upon them as ob-
jects of suspicion, the persons who were really dis-

affected, and who were waiting for a political leader, might be likely to escape observation. The death of Symeon was certainly owing to malicious information of this kind. He was accused, as I have stated, by certain heretics, and brought before Atticus, who was at this time lieutenant of Syria. The venerable bishop of Jerusalem was now 120 years old: and though his examination, which was apparently accompanied with torture, lasted for several days, he bore it with such firmness and resolution, as filled Atticus, and all the persons present, with astonishment. We are not told whether other topics of inquiry were touched upon beside that of his being descended from David; but an investigation of some days may have been required to convince a Roman magistrate, that several thousand Jews could look up to a descendant of David as their head, and yet not be objects of political suspicion. It appears, that Atticus was not convinced. The unbelieving Jews perhaps encouraged his prejudices: and the scene of iniquity was closed by Symeon being condemned to suffer the same death, which his divine Master had undergone more than seventy years before^y.

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104.

y I have placed the death of Symeon in 104. L'oyd and Dodwell placed it as late as 116: but the more usual date is 107, the only authority for which is the *Chronicon* of Eusebius. This work certainly seems to mention the death of Symeon in the tenth year of Trajan: but it is generally acknowledged, that Eusebius connects different events together, without intending to assert that they happened at the same time; and in the present instance he

perhaps meant to speak of the death of Symeon as the first transaction of importance in the persecution which happened under Trajan. Pearson placed the death of Symeon earlier than 107: (*De Success.* p. 9.) Ruinart and Baratier assign it to 104: and the latter (p. 73.) quotes Dio as saying, that Pallas was governor of Syria in 105, 106, and 107. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 426.

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104.

The vacancy, which was thus caused in the bishopric of Jerusalem, was supplied by Justus : but the election was unfortunately not so unanimous as that of Symeon had been : at least another person put forward his pretensions, and the result of his disappointment was injurious to the peace of the church. This person was Thebuthis^z, concerning whose subsequent history we know nothing ; but he now made himself the leader of a party, and apparently embraced some form of that philosophy, which though maintained by sects of various names, was generally distinguished by that of Gnosticism. It was now, according to the testimony of Hegesippus^a, that the Gnostics began to produce defection from the church. He tells us, that if there were any persons before, who endeavoured to corrupt the purity of the Gospel, they had hitherto lurked in obscurity : but when the apostles were all removed by death, and no persons remained who had heard our Saviour's preaching, the false doctrines of these heretics began to assume a systematic form ; the true and genuine Gospel was openly attacked by the Gnostics ; and the church, which up to this time had continued in virgin purity, was now disfigured by corruptions.

Such is the statement of Hegesippus ; which I understand to mean, that it was not till the beginning of the second century, that the Christians began in any numbers to embrace the errors of Gnosticism. This writer, having been himself a Jew, had perhaps an eye particularly to the church of Jerusalem : but his remark was certainly true of

^z Hegesippus apud Eus. *H. E.* IV. 22. See Lecture IX. at the end.

^a *Ib.* III. 32.

the Christians of Asia Minor, and perhaps in every other part of the world. The opinions, which afterwards bore the name of Gnosticism, were certainly entertained, as I have already stated, in the first century. They were combated by St. Paul, and afterwards by St. John, in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. I have conjectured, that the Cerinthians, Ebionites, Carpocratians, and Nicolaitans were in existence before the end of the first century. It could hardly be thought that some Christians had not joined them: but still the remark of Hegesippus may be true, that it was not till the beginning of the reign of Trajan, that the Gnostic errors were embraced to any extent by persons who had been true believers. The church at Jerusalem was likely to be infected by the tenets of the Ebionites: and the Ebionite creed seems to have received some variations at the time which we are now considering. The Gospels have made us acquainted with two Jewish sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees: but there is evidence of the divisions having been more numerous; and some writers have mentioned as many as seven or eight sects, which were in existence at the time of our Saviour, or shortly after^b. One of these sects was that of the Essæans, or Osseniens, who have been identified by some writers with the Essenes^c: and Epiphanius tells us, that one of them named Elxai, or Elcesai, went over to the Ebionites in the time of Trajan^d. If we couple this statement with the passage quoted above from Hegesippus, we

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104.

^b Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.* 80. p. 178. Hegesippus *apud Eus. H. E.* IV. 22. Epiphanius. *Hær.* XIV. p. 31. Isidor. *Orig.* VIII. 4.

^c See Brucker, *Hist. Philos.* vol. II. p. 787.

^d *Hær.* XIX. 1. p. 40: 5. p. 43. *Hær.* XXX. 17. p. 141.

A. D.
104.

shall perhaps think it probable, that this took place after the death of Symeon, when so many heresies are said to have arisen. The Elcesaites continued till the third century^e, and it is demonstrable that their tenets resembled those of the Gnostics. Their founder, however, though he is stated to have joined the Ebionites, may be said in some points to have brought them over to his own opinions. He adopted some of their notions concerning Christ, making them still more mystical and absurd : but with respect to Jesus, who was believed to be a different person from Christ, there is some reason to think that the doctrine of his miraculous conception was held by Elxai^f. The Ebionites are known to have been divided upon this point ; and while one part of them believed Jesus to be a mere man, born in the ordinary way, others of them believed him to have been born of a virgin. This division perhaps began in the reign of Trajan, when some of the Ebionites attached themselves to Elxai.

The followers of this man were not supporters of those principles of austerity which the first Ebionites are said to have recommended. They also avowed the doctrine, which many of the Gnostics are known to have inculcated, that there was no sin in worshipping an idol in the time of persecution, if it was merely an outward act of the mouth, without the conscience being involved. We have seen, that this convenient compromise was practised by the Nicolaitans before the end of the first century : and the persecution which followed upon the death of Symeon, may have been the time when Elxai per-

^e Origen, *apud* Eus. II. E. VI. 38.

^f See Theodoret, *Hær. Fab.* II. 7. p. 221.

sua^ded some of the Ebionite Christians to save themselves by this mental equivocation. A. D.
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We have the authority of Eusebius^g for saying, that at this time the people were excited in many different places to persecute the Christians: but hitherto we have seen little or no reason for connecting the emperor with these scenes of cruelty, and the persecution seems to have been confined to the eastern part of the empire. Trajan, as I have stated, was engaged for some years in conquering Dacia, and would have neither time nor inclination to attend to questions of religion. The date of his return to Rome after the second Dacian war is uncertain^h; and there is the same disagreement as to the year in which he commenced a still greater undertaking, and set out to conquer Parthia and Armenia. After weighing the different opinionsⁱ, I should conclude that the preparations for this war were made in the year 107, and Trajan probably left Rome in the spring. A. D.
107. The first place at which he stopped for any length of time was Antioch. This city was the Roman capital of Syria: and a war with Parthia or Armenia made it the natural quarters for an army which was marching to invade either of those countries. While Trajan was collecting his forces at Antioch, he received an embassy from Abgarus, the sovereign of Edessa, or rather of the Osroeni, whose capital was a city of that name upon the Euphrates^k. It was the obvious policy of Abgarus to avert the storm from his own territories, which

^g H. E. III. 32, 33.

^h Baronius places it in 104. Pagi in 107 or 108.

ⁱ Baronius makes the war to have begun in 105, Pagi in

112: but Baratier gives good reasons for placing it in 107. (*De Success.* p. 85.)

^k Suidas, v. *Augarus*.

A. D. 107. was about to burst upon his more powerful neighbours, and he accordingly sent presents to Trajan, accompanied with professions of friendship. I should hardly have noticed this circumstance, which might seem to be purely of a political character, if I had not been led in a former Lecture to speak of Edessa, as a place where the Gospel had been received at a very early period¹. The history of the church in that country is connected in some measure with Trajan's expedition to the east. If we may believe traditions, the Christians of Edessa were exposed at this time to a severe persecution, and the name of their bishop Barsimæus is preserved, who, with several other persons, suffered martyrdom^m. An event such as this may perhaps have happened; and Baronius may be right, who places it in this period of the reign of Trajan: but there is no evidence, that the presence of the emperor in any way promoted it. We shall see that the Christians at Antioch were at this time suffering persecution; and it is possible, that their persecutors may have urged the messengers of Abgarus to act in the same way to the Christians in their own country. That a system of hostility to the Gospel was now becoming prevalent in many parts of Asia, can hardly be doubted: but there is reason to think that Trajan found it already in action, and was not the mover of it. He certainly did not discourage it; and my next Lecture will begin with one of the most interesting and affecting incidents of the second century, the martyrdom of Ignatius.

¹ Lecture XI. p. 328.

^m Martyrol. Rom. Jan. 30.

LECTURE XIV.



THE date of the martyrdom of Ignatius has led to much discussion, and will perhaps never be settled beyond dispute. Some have placed it as early as 107, others as late as 116. If we admit the document, which is called the Acts of Ignatius, we can hardly fail to adopt the earliest of these dates. It states expressly that Trajan was then at Antioch, and that Sura and Senecio were consuls; two events, which will be found only to meet in the year 107. It is true, that Trajan was at Antioch more than once, and it has been argued that he was not there for the first time till the year 113^a: but it has been shewn, on the other hand, that he was at Antioch in the year 107, when he set out for the Parthian war^b; and since this is also the year when Sura and Senecio were consuls, and many expressions in the Acts of Ignatius point to an early year in the reign of Trajan, I feel compelled to follow the majority of chronologists, ancient and modern, and to conclude, that the martyrdom of Ignatius happened in the year 107.

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107.

I have supposed that Trajan left Rome in the spring of that year, and proceeded to Antioch, where he was employed for some months in pre-

^a Lloyd, apud Pagi ad Baron. an. 109.

^b Baratier, *de Success.* p. 85.

A. D. 107. preparations for the invasion of Armenia and Parthia. Upon his arrival at Antioch, he was called upon to interfere in matters of a very different kind. The Christian church in that city was second only to that of Jerusalem in the date of its foundation, and the Christians of Antioch had become extremely numerous. They had now for several years been under the spiritual government of Ignatius, who must have attained to a great age, if he was appointed to his bishopric, as some writers have asserted, by St. Peter and St. Paul^c. He had been personally acquainted with St. John, and had been a sufferer from Domitian's persecution^d: since which period, he had been enjoying a freedom from molestation till the year in which Trajan arrived at Antioch. I should conjecture, that the arrival of the emperor was not the cause of the present persecution. It seems to have arisen from a combination of causes, which I shall consider presently; and Trajan probably found the city in a ferment, when he first entered it.

There is no reason to think, that Trajan had hitherto come much in contact with the Christians, or had made himself acquainted with their doctrines. We may be sure, however, that there were persons about his court, who would wish to prejudice him against them: and we are told, that his victories in Dacia had excited him to seek for further fame by subduing the Christians^e. It is certain, that the heathen had begun before this time to harass the Christians, by requiring them to conform to the national worship: and seasons of pub-

^c See Lecture XII. p. 357.

^e Ib. p. 15. ed. Ruinart.

^d Act. Ignat. *in init.*

lic rejoicing, when the temples and amphitheatres were crowded in honour of the gods, were generally attended with some acts of cruelty to the Christians. It is not unlikely, that cases of this sort occurred, when Trajan was celebrating his Dacian triumph. The religious ceremonies with which he prepared for his expedition to the East, may have furnished similar instances: and it was easy for the enemies of the Christians to persuade the emperor, that persons, who would not pray to the gods for his success, could not really be faithful subjects. If Trajan entered Antioch with prepossessions of this kind, he was not likely to judge impartially, when he had to interpose between the Christians and the heathen. Ignatius appears to have sought an interview with him; and the result of the conference was, that the emperor ordered him to be taken to Rome, and exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre. It was generally a distinction reserved for Roman citizens, that if they had committed an offence in the provinces, they were sent for their punishment to the capital^f. This, however, does not appear to have been the reason in the case of Ignatius; and I should conjecture, that his being sent to Rome was owing to some persons who had attended the emperor from thence, and who wished to gratify their friends at home, by sending to them the man, who was more looked up to than all the Christians in the East. The punishment, to which he was condemned, was generally reserved for culprits of the lowest condition; and the Christians were perhaps viewed in this light by the heathen^g. It was also

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^f Plin. *Epist.* X. 97.

^g See Kortholt. *de Vita et Moribus Christianorum*, c. 13.

A. D. 107. inflicted upon persons convicted of magic or sacrilege, both of which crimes were laid to the charge of the Christians^b; and it seems to have been a common thing, in the second century, to put them to death by exposure to wild beasts.

Ecclesiastical history has scarcely preserved a more interesting and affecting narrative, than that of the journey of Ignatius from Antioch to Rome. In tracing the procession of the martyr to his final triumph, we forget that we are reading of a prisoner who was dragged to his death in chains. He was committed to a guard of ten soldiers, who appear to have treated him with severity; and after taking ship at Seleucia, they landed for a time at Smyrna. He had here the gratification of meeting with Polycarp, who was bishop of that see, and who, like himself, had enjoyed a personal acquaintance with St. John. His arrival also excited a sensation through the whole of Asia Minor. Onesimus, bishop of Ephesus, Polybius, bishop of Tralles, and Demas, bishop of Magnesia, came from their respective cities, with a deputation of their clergy, to visit the venerable martyr: and one particular must not be omitted, which is of the greatest interest in the history of this period, that these persons came to Ignatius, in the hopes that he would communicate to them some spiritual gift. The fact is mentioned in the authentic document, to which I have already referred, and which was probably written at the time: and though it shews, that these preternatural gifts were now becoming scarce, it unanswerably proves, that they were not altogether extinct.

^b See Kortholt, *de Calumniis Paganorum*, c. 15.

Ignatius took the opportunity of writing from Smyrna to the churches, over which these bishops presided; and his epistles to the Ephesians, Trallians, and Magnesians, are still extant. Hearing also of some Ephesians, who were going to Rome, and who were likely to arrive there more expeditiously than himself, he addressed a letter to the church in that city. Chronologists have so perplexed the dates and successions of the early bishops of Rome, that it is difficult to say who was at present at the head of that church. According to Eusebius and the more received system of Chronology, that station was now filled by Evarestus, who had succeeded Clement in the year 100: but some modern writers have endeavoured to prove that Xystus must at this time have been bishop of Rome. In either case it is not probable that the bishop of Rome had any personal acquaintance with the bishop of Antioch, and the letter of Ignatius is addressed to the church of Rome, without any mention of the bishop. His principal object in writing was to prevent any attempt, which the Roman Christians might have made, to procure a reprieve from the death which was awaiting him. He expresses himself not only willing, but anxious, to meet the wild beasts in the amphitheatre; and there never perhaps was a more perfect pattern of resignation, than that which we find in this letter.

From Smyrna he proceeded to Troas, where he was met as before by some of the neighbouring bishops; and the bishop of Philadelphia became the bearer of a letter which he wrote to the Christians in that city. He also wrote from the same place to the church of Smyrna; and the personal

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A. D. 107. regard which he had for Polycarp, the bishop of that see, will explain why he also wrote to him, and made it his dying request that he would attend to the church of Antioch. These seven epistles, which were written by Ignatius from Smyrna and Troas, are still extant, and have been published several timesⁱ. Next to the writings of the Apostles, they are perhaps the most interesting documents, which the church possesses. They are the writings of a man who was contemporary with the Apostles, and who had certainly received more than the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. We must not expect, in seven short letters, written by a man who was on his way to execution, to meet with any thing like an argumentative exposition of the Christian faith. But they are filled with expressions of the most sincere and affecting piety : and the question of church-government cannot be discussed, so far as relates to primitive customs, without a perusal of the epistles of Ignatius. They also confirm, what is stated by Eusebius^k, that the venerable martyr alluded to heresies, which were then beginning to shew themselves, and adjured the churches to adhere to the doctrine which had been delivered by the Apostles. The heresies were those of Gnosticism : and it is plain from the letters, which he addressed to the Asiatic churches, that there was abundant need for his exhortation and warning. The letter to the church of Rome does not contain any of these allusions ; and though it might be said, that Ignatius was not acquainted with the state of things in Italy, I should be

ⁱ For a list of editions see Ittigius, *de Patr. Apost.* Thes. 83, &c.

^k H. E. III. 36.

inclined to quote this letter, as one proof among others, that Gnosticism had not as yet made much progress in Rome. A. D.
107.

It appears, that Ignatius had intended to write letters to some other churches from Troas ; but his guards were impatient to proceed, and once more setting sail, they followed the course which St. Paul had taken upon his first journey into Greece, and landed at Neapolis. Their journey by land through Macedonia appears to have been rapid. We know that they passed through Philippi; and some other epistles are extant, which are supposed to have been written by Ignatius from that city. They are addressed to the churches of Antioch and Tarsus, and to Heres, who was then a deacon in the church of Antioch, and succeeded Ignatius in the bishopric. There is also an epistle, which he is said to have written to the Christians at Philippi, soon after leaving that city: and another which is addressed to a woman of the name of Mary. It is now generally acknowledged, that these five epistles are spurious¹. The forgery is of ancient date, and for a long time they were received without any distinction among the genuine writings of Ignatius. It has however been demonstrated, that great liberties have been taken with the works of this apostolical martyr. Not only were the spurious epistles added to the number, but the seven, which are genuine, were interpolated and enlarged, so as to retain for their basis the sentiments of Ignatius, but very frequently to speak the language of a later

¹ Two epistles to St. John, not deserve even to be mentioned, and one to the Virgin Mary, which only exist in Latin, do

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age^m. We are indebted for the publication of the genuine epistles to Isaac Vossius, who discovered them in a MS. at Florence, and gave them to the world in 1646 : since which time, though some few critics have doubted, and others have suspected even the shorter edition to be interpolated, the opinion of the learned has established beyond dispute the genuineness of these invaluable epistlesⁿ. I ought perhaps to mention that a writer of the fifth century^o ascribed to Ignatius the introduction of a custom, which existed at that time in Antioch, and perhaps in most other churches, of singing hymns in alternate parts or verses^p. He states, that Ignatius took the idea from a vision of angels whom he heard singing hymns in this way to the praise of the Trinity. The tradition was probably very old ; and it at least shews, that the memory of their apostolical bishop was still held in veneration by the Christians of Antioch.

Ignatius and his company embarked once more on the western coast of Epirus, and, crossing the Adriatic, arrived at Rome. There are accounts which speak of his being put to various tortures, and of some days having elapsed before he was exposed in the amphitheatre^q. But this seems to have been an invention of later times. The authentic narrative leaves room for no interval, except what was wanted for the journey from Ostia to Rome. There was

^m It is the opinion of Grabe that these spurious additions were the work of an Arian. *Spicileg. Sac.* II. p. 225.

ⁿ The question is not only demonstrated, but exhausted, by Pearson, in his *Vindicie*

Ignatianæ.

^o Socrat. *H. E.* VI. 8.

^p Ἀντιφώνους ὕμνους, from whence our word *Anthem*.

^q Metaphrast. *apud* Sur. Febr. 1. Ado, Febr. 1.

now an exhibition of games^r, which lasted some days; and it seems to have been intended, that the death of Ignatius should form part of the spectacle. The voyage had been hurried on this account; and on the last day of the games, which was the 19th of December, the holy martyr was led into the amphitheatre, and his death seems to have been the work of a moment. In his letter to the Roman church he had prayed that the wild beasts might despatch him speedily, and not refuse to touch him, as had sometimes been the case. His prayer was heard; and the Christians at Rome, who had thought themselves blest to have even seen the apostolical bishop of Antioch among them, had now to pick up a few of the larger and harder bones, which was all that the wild beasts had spared. It appears from a letter of Pliny^s, that if the friend of a deceased person wished to remove his remains, they were to apply for leave to the pontifical college; and such permission was probably obtained before the persons, who had accompanied Ignatius from Antioch, could venture to gather up his bones, and carry them back to their own city. If we did not know that this was the case, we might have thought that the indulgence would neither have been asked or granted, in the present excited state of public feeling. But the spectators in the amphitheatre had had their gratification; their thirst for blood had been satisfied; and the pontifices would perhaps be glad that the bones of the martyr should be carried to Antioch, rather than continue at Rome, where

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^r Probably the Saturnalia, at the end of which was another festival of seven days, called Sigillaria, Macrob. *Sat.* I. 10.
^s Epist. X. 73.

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they might serve to animate the Christians to further resistance. It is to be observed, that not a word is to be found in the contemporary document concerning any thing like religious worship being paid to these remains. We read of their being carried to Antioch, and being received on the road with nearly the same honours which were paid to the holy martyr himself, when he touched at the different cities^t. But no trace of superstition appears in these demonstrations of piety and affection. The friends of Ignatius speak of his remains as “an invaluable treasure;” and as such they were deposited near one of the gates in the suburbs of Antioch^u.

It is pleasing to believe, that the persecution ceased in that city, as soon as Ignatius was sent to Rome. The martyr heard the joyful news on his road, and mentions it in some of his letters^x. The enemies of the Christians were perhaps satisfied with having effected the death of such a man as Ignatius, and may have deluded themselves by supposing, that when the head was cut off, the members would soon cease to be united. Trajan also would be too much occupied with his military preparations to attend to these matters; and though the loss to the church of Antioch was in some points irreparable, the vacant bishopric was conferred upon Heros, who held it for upwards of twenty years. Ignatius, as I have stated, in his letter to Polycarp, had entreated him to take care of the church of Antioch. Polycarp was nearly the last surviving bishop, who had conversed with an apostle. The case may have been

^t Chrysost. *Hom. de Ignat.*
in fine.

^x Epist. ad Smyrn. et Philadelph.

^u Hieron. *Catal.*

the same with Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia: but both these cities were far removed from Antioch; and we cannot tell whether Polycarp personally interfered in providing a successor to his martyred friend. We know, however, that he took great interest in his memory; and we are indebted to Polycarp for having preserved authentic copies of the letters of Ignatius. The intercourse between distant churches is illustrated by a letter, which the bishop of Smyrna addressed to the Christians at Philippi, from which it appears, that he had collected the epistles of Ignatius, and subjoined them to his own letter, which he was then writing. This is the only work of Polycarp which has come down to us; and it seems to have been written very soon after the time that Ignatius left Philippi^y. There is reason to think, that the Christians in the latter city did not escape persecution. Onesimus also, who was bishop of Ephesus, is said to have been sent to Rome by the proconsul of Asia, where he was stoned to death. This punishment however was not common at Rome; and the martyrdoms, which Baronius has recorded, in his history of this period, are not to be received as established facts. An error has perhaps been committed in assigning persecutions to particular years, and in tracing them to the emperors as their cause. We speak of the persecutions under Nero and Domitian, and the expression is probably not incorrect. The heathen were then only beginning their attacks upon the Christians; and the cruelty of one individual might raise a persecution, which lasted for a time and then subsided.

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^y For the genuineness of this epistle, see Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Select. cap. I. 4. p. 5.*

A. D. 107. Such acts as these would also be confined to the imperial residence. But at the beginning of the second century, the opposition to the Christians became more general, both as to the places where it was displayed, and the determination with which it was carried on. The more distant provinces seem now to have surpassed the capital in hostility to the Christians; and though I should not speak of any new persecution as set on foot by Trajan, we might perhaps describe the whole of his reign as a series of vexatious and cruel aggressions upon the believers in Christ.

The emperor, as I have stated, had a part in the martyrdom of Ignatius: but I have also observed, that he was most probably instigated by others to consent to this act: and for some years afterwards he was so taken up by his campaigns in Parthia and Armenia, that he would not be likely to attend to disputes about religion. The chronology of this part of his reign is involved in such perplexity, that it is almost hopeless to assign his conquests to their respective years, or even to fix the commencement and termination of the war. Such precision is not required for ecclesiastical history: but we may say generally, that if Trajan marched from Antioch in the year 107, he probably finished the war in 110 or 111, and returned to Rome. In the course of these years he conquered the Armenians and Parthians, beside several less civilized nations, and took the capitals of Selencia, Ctesiphon, and Babylon. It was after the taking of these cities, that Trajan is said, according to the ancient custom, to have purified his army, and to have sent into Armenia ten thousand of his troops, who refused to join in the sacrifices, as

being Christians. It is added, that Romulus, who A. D.
107-110. was high in the emperor's household, remonstrated with him upon the imprudence of this act, and avowed himself a Christian; in consequence of which, he was first beaten by order of the emperor and then beheaded. The ten thousand soldiers are reported to have been afterwards crucified in the mountains of Armenia. The story is to be found in Martyrologies^z, and is adopted by Baronius: but though scenes of this sort were not unlikely to happen, when the whole army was called upon to join in a sacrifice, it is difficult to believe, that Trajan would have so weakened his army by sending away ten thousand soldiers, or that so large a body was put to death by crucifixion. To some it will perhaps appear incredible, that so many Christians should have been found in the army, and we may at least conclude that the numbers have been exaggerated: but the martyrdom of Romulus, and the circumstances which led to it, may not be altogether devoid of foundation. We may perhaps say the same of the death of Hyacinthus, who was chamberlain to the emperor, and who was put into prison at Cæsarea in Cappadocia for worshipping Christ, and there died of starvation. His martyrdom, if it happened at all, most probably took place when the army was upon its return at the end of the war. There may also be indications of a persecution when Trajan was at Antioch in some other year, subsequent to the martyrdom of Ignatius. He was certainly in that city during a tremendous earth-

^z Martyrol. Rom. *Septemb.* 5. *Sel. cap.* VI. 15. p. 285. Tille-
Metaphrast. *Septemb.* 5. See mont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part.
Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sæc.* II. 2. p. 438.

A. D. 107-110. quake^a, which, according to some writers, happened in the year 115^b, while others have placed it in the end of 110^c. Great part of Antioch was destroyed by this earthquake, and by fires which accompanied it. Famine also and pestilence were added to these dreadful visitations: and since the Christians were often accused of bringing down these signs of anger from the gods, it is possible that they suffered upon this occasion. Trajan is described as seeking to avert the evil by no common remedies^d; which seems to allude to some kind of religious expiation: and if he listened to the popular notion concerning the Christians, he may have thought himself justified in appeasing the wrath of Heaven by the blood of the Christians. Nicephorus certainly speaks of a persecution at Antioch, while Trajan was staying there, and he describes it in some detail^e: but this writer, when unsupported by other authority, is to be read with great caution.

Whatever may be thought of the evidence in these cases, there is unquestionable proof, that the Gospel had been rapidly gaining ground during the period which we have been considering. The celebrated letter of Pliny^f to Trajan leaves no room for doubt as to what had taken place in the province of Bithynia. Like the other events in this emperor's reign, the date of Pliny's arrival in his province, and consequently of his letter concerning the Christians, has

^a Dio LXVIII. 24 .p. 1138.
Evagrius II. 12.

^b Lloyd, Fabretti, Pagi.

^c Baratier, *de Success. Pontif.*
Rom. p. 88.

^d Quibus omnibus Trajanus
per exquisita remedia opitula-

tus est. *Victor.*

^e Hist. Eccl. III. 23.

^f Epist. X. 97. An elaborate
commentary upon this epistle
was published by Kortholt,
1674.

given rise to much dispute: but there seems most reason to agree with those persons who assign the letter to the year 111. The earlier date rests principally upon the assumption, that Pliny's provincial administration followed very closely upon his being consul. This was the custom in the days of the republic; but when the emperors took to appoint several consuls in one year, who held their office for only some months or weeks, these officers were often obliged to wait several years, before their turn came for receiving a proconsular province. This was the case with Pliny. He was made consul late in the year 100; but it has been satisfactorily proved, that he was not appointed proconsul or proprætor^g of Bithynia till 110^h. In the September of the latter year he arrived in his province, having landed at Ephesusⁱ. On the day after his arrival he celebrated the emperor's birthday, and this may have brought some Christians under his notice, who were always subject to molestation, when they refused to join in any public act of superstition. Pliny had perhaps as much religion, and regard for the gods, as any of the heathen in his day. When he was appointed to his province, he had asked the emperor to confer upon him also the office of augur, that in this sacred capacity he might offer prayers in public for the emperor's safety: an act of devotion, as he adds, which he had hitherto performed in private^j. It is most probable, that his request was granted, as the office was then vacant: and when he was acting

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^g Cardinal Norrisius says that he was not proconsul, but legatus Augusti, or proprætor with consular authority. *Apud Pagi ad Baron. an. 104.* See *Petit. de Jure Principum Edictis Ecclesiæ quæsito. c. 4.*

^h Pagi ad Baron. 104.

ⁱ Plin. *Epist.* X. 26, 28.

^j *Ib.* X. 8.

A. D. 110. as augur, his mind would at least be turned to matters of religion, and he would be likely to inquire more closely into the cases of persons, who were accused of declining the public worship. We know, that his first business, upon entering the province, was to inspect the public buildings; and the state of the temples thus came immediately under his notice^k. According to his own statement, he found them almost deserted: the sacrifices and other solemnities had been for a long time neglected; and the sellers of victims complained that there were no purchasers. The rapid increase of Christianity had caused this desertion of the temples. Pliny himself informs us, that the number of Christians was very great. The contagion of this superstition, as he terms it, had reached even to the small villages and hamlets. Persons of either sex, and of all ages and ranks, even Roman citizens, had embraced it; and unless something was done speedily to check it, the national religion was at an end.

Bithynia had received the Gospel at an early period. St. Paul was prevented from preaching there, when he took his second journey in 46; but there were Christians in the country, when St. Peter wrote his first epistle, about the year 58 or 59: and according to some traditions, the Apostle Andrew preached the Gospel in that country, as well as in Pontus. When Pliny entered the province, he met with persons who had embraced Christianity twenty years before, but had then abjured it; from which we may perhaps infer, that they had apostatized in Domitian's persecution^l. Notwithstanding the pro-

^k Ulpian. lib. VII. *de Offic. Procons.*

^l The Roman Martyrology speaks of St. Luke being mar-

gress which the Gospel had made, Pliny speaks of finding the people in a perfect state of obedience and loyalty to the emperor^m; a remark, which ought not to be omitted, since it seems to establish two points; first, that the Christians, though their numbers attracted the notice of the chief magistrate, had shewn no symptoms of disaffection or disorder; and secondly, it may perhaps shew, that the system of harassing the Christians for their religious scruples was not going on, when Pliny entered upon his government. The calm, however, was of short duration; and the amiable and philosophical prætor (for he seems to have deserved these epithets) cannot be acquitted of reviving the popular feelings of injustice and intolerance.

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The recurrence of any festival or solemnity in honour of the gods or the emperor, was generally an occasion of annoyance to the Christians. It was perhaps optional with them to attend a public sacrifice or no: but they were required, as a test of their loyalty, not only to pray for the emperor's safety, but to pay religious worship to his statue: and the zeal of the people for their national faith was likely to run high, during the license and excesses of a public festival. These celebrations became more numerous under every succeeding emperor. The days on which he had first been appointed prætor, on which he had been adopted by his predecessor, or succeeded to the empire, were all made occasions of rejoicing; and though they generally were kept once in every five years, there was scarcely a year, in which the people were not gratified by

tyred in Bithynia after many sufferings. *Octob.* 18. ^m *Epist.* X. 28.

A. D. 110. the quinquennalia, decennalia, or quindecennalia of some event in the life of their emperor. There is evidence, that the quindecennalia, or fifteenth anniversary of Trajan's proconsular authority, and of his adoption to the empire, was celebrated in 111, or the year after Pliny's arrival in Bithyniaⁿ. He speaks of the joy, which was displayed upon the occasion, and of the zeal with which the oath of fidelity was taken by the soldiers and the magistrates. Religious ceremonies were also added : and from what we have seen of the deserted state of the temples before the arrival of Pliny, we may be sure, that his wish to restore the forms of public worship must soon have brought him into collision with the Christians. We have his own evidence, that this was the case : and his letter to Trajan upon the subject was probably written early in the year 111.

A. D. 111. A great number of persons had then been brought before him, who were accused of being Christians. He professes that the case was new to him, never having been present at such examinations before. The laws also were not precise upon the subject, and he consulted the emperor as to the course which he was to follow. In the mean time he had examined the parties accused ; and if they still confessed themselves Christians upon the third interrogatory, he ordered them to be put to death^o. The mere fact of their obstinacy, (for he does not pretend to allege any crime,) appeared to Pliny a sufficient justification of this severity. If they denied the charge, the test which he used, was to require them to pay divine honours to figures of the gods

ⁿ Plin. *Epist.* X. 60. Pagi ad Baron. an. 104.

^o The words, *duci jussi*, seem to have no other meaning.

and the emperor, and to join in imprecations against Christ: and his own words supply the remarkable testimony, that no compulsion could make a real Christian join in any of these acts. Some of the persons, who were acquitted by Pliny upon their satisfying him in these points, were perhaps Gnostics, who, as I have often stated, were apt to be confounded with the Christians, and had no scruples in avoiding persecution by joining in the national superstitions. There were others, who acknowledged that they had once been Christians, but had abjured that doctrine; and these also were discharged, upon joining in imprecations against Christ, and in worshipping the gods. But even these persons did not pretend to allege any crime against their former associates. The words of Pliny have been repeatedly quoted, but they are too remarkable for me to omit them in this place. “These men affirmed, that
 “ their fault or error amounted only to this, that
 “ they were accustomed to meet on a regular day
 “ before it was light, and to join in a set form of
 “ words, addressed to Christ as to God^p: they also
 “ entered into a sacred obligation, which had no
 “ criminal tendency, but only bound them not to
 “ steal, or commit adultery, or break their word, or
 “ refuse to restore any thing entrusted to them.
 “ When this was over, they were in the habit of
 “ breaking up, until they met again to partake of a

A. D.
 111.

^p *Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere*, which may mean that they sang an hymn. See Mosheim, *de rebus ante Const.* Cent. I. §. 47. We may compare the words of Livy (XXXIX.

18.) *Qui tantum initiati erant, et ex carmine sacro, præeunte verba sacerdote, preces fecerant, in quibus nefanda conjuratio in omne facinus ac libidinem continebatur, &c.*

A. D. “common meal, at which persons of all ranks
 111. “attended, but in a manner perfectly harmless.”

The honourable testimony of these apostates was confirmed by two female attendants, or deaconesses, whom Pliny thought fit to examine by torture: but he could elicit nothing from them, except, to use his own words, that their superstition was debasing, and exceeded all bounds. We can hardly doubt, that by the regular day, on which the Christians were in the habit of meeting, we are to understand the Lord's day, or Sunday, which, as I have already observed^q, had been kept sacred from the time of the Apostles: and by the common meal, alluded to in the same passage, we are to understand the *Agapæ*, or love feasts, at which the Christians were accustomed to meet, and at the same time to receive the sacramental bread and wine. When Pliny spoke of this common meal as harmless, he perhaps had in his mind the calumnies to which these meetings gave rise. The Christians were said on such occasions to indulge in the grossest sensuality^r: but it is plain, from Pliny's own statement, that he did not even suspect these libels to be true: and their custom of meeting “before it was light,” which also gave rise to injurious suspicions and reports, was owing to the danger which they incurred, if they were seen to attend such meetings in open day^s. The *Agapæ*, however, furnished him with the most tangible mode of interfering with the Christians. The whole of his letter confirms, what might be inferred from other documents, that at this time there were no positive laws, which condemned the

^q See Lecture VIII. p. 237.

^r See Lecture X. p. 309.

^s See Kortholt. *de Calumn. Pagan.* c. 16.

Christians merely for professing their religion. It is true, that Pliny put them to death: but he justifies this on the ground of their obstinacy, not because they were Christians; and he consulted the emperor upon the subject, because the matter was evidently one which was left to discretion, and not decided by law. He had however authority from the emperor to suppress meetings and associations. Trajan seems to have observed, that even an incorporation of workmen of the same trade had been a cloke for political divisions^t: and in virtue of the order which prohibited these associations, Pliny forbade the Christians to hold their private meetings. His edict was obeyed, though the case seems hardly to have come within the meaning of the emperor: and this is another proof, that as yet there was no more definite law, by which he could act against the Christians. It is said indeed by Sulpitius Severus, that Christianity was prohibited by express edicts, in the reign of Nero: but this is confirmed by no other author, and is contradicted by the letter of Pliny; and since the answer of Trajan to this letter seems henceforward to have been the only warrant for punishing the Christians, a few remarks may be made in this place concerning the Roman laws which had any reference to such cases.

There was a law in the twelve tables, which prohibited nightly meetings within the city^u. But this was evidently directed against the commission of crime: and by the same law persons of good character were allowed to form themselves into

^t Plin. *Epist.* X. 42, 43, 94. turnes agitassit, capital esto.

^u Si qui in urbe cœtus noc- Tab. IX. ed. Gothofred.

A. D.
111.

societies^x. In the year of Rome 539, M. Attilius, the prætor of the city, was ordered by the senate to take steps for repressing foreign superstitions; and an edict was issued, that no person should sacrifice in public after a new or foreign fashion^y. This, however, could hardly apply to persons who did not sacrifice at all; and there is no evidence that this edict was intended to create a capital offence. There were perhaps other edicts of this kind: for when the rites of Bacchus were suppressed in the year 566, we find the consul saying, that the magistrates had often been commissioned to prevent the introduction of foreign modes of worship^z. These edicts, however, seem to have been confined to the cases which called them forth: and we might infer, that there was no positive or general law upon the subject, since we find the removal of foreign superstitions entrusted sometimes to the prætor^a, sometimes to the ædiles^b, and sometimes to the pontifex maximus^c; which seems to shew, that it was not even settled, whether such offences were to be treated as civil or religious matters. Every new superstition required a specific decree of the senate; and though the votaries of Bacchus were exposed to what might be called a persecution, private individuals were still allowed, under certain restrictions, and with legal permission, to practise these monstrous absurdities. The same jealousy of political associations, which we have seen in Trajan, was

^x See Balduinus, *Comment. ad XII Tab.* Kortholt. *de Calumniis Pagan.* c. XVI. 14.

^y Liv. XXV. 1.

^z Ib. XXXIX. 16. See IV.

30. Val. Max. I. 3.

^a Liv. XXV. 1.

^b Ib. IV. 30.

^c Ib. IX. 46, XXXI. 9.

probably the cause of Julius Cæsar passing a similar edict so many years before. He prohibited any clubs or societies within the city, and religious meetings might perhaps have come within the prohibition: but he made a special exception in favour of the Jews, which was confirmed by the senate upon the death of Cæsar, and afterwards by Augustus^d. It is probable that this law was confined literally to associations within the city, and would have furnished no precedent for Pliny in Bithynia: added to which, the exception in favour of the Jews, would perhaps have protected the Christians, who, as I have already stated, were generally confounded with the Jews. I have had occasion to mention the advice which Mæcenas gave to Augustus, that he would punish persons who introduced any strange religion^e: and he openly avowed his principle, that meetings and associations, under the pretext of religion, might become dangerous to the government. Nothing however is said as to the mode of punishment which he suggested; nor does it appear that Augustus followed his advice, so as to pass any positive statute.

Such was the state of the Roman law, or rather such had been the practice of Roman magistrates, when Pliny consulted the emperor Trajan upon the subject. There was abundance of precedent for suppressing foreign superstitions by special edicts, and Trajan was merely following his predecessors in forbidding associations. But there was no gene-

A. D.
111.

^d Joseph. *Antiq.* XVI. 6. A collection of all the edicts which allowed the Jews of Asia Minor to exercise their religion, was published by J. Gronovius, Lugduni, 1712.
^e Lecture VI. p. 172.

A. D.
111.

ral law which prescribed the form of trial or the punishment; nor had there been any special enactment, which made Christianity a crime. Pliny was called upon to act, and Trajan to establish a precedent, in a case which had not yet been decided: and though the emperor's answer is not expressed in the form of a law, it seems to have been acted upon for several years, and to have been the only authority under which Christianity was capitally punished. There is in the answer of Trajan an appearance of justice, and even of lenity: but it was really a most iniquitous and cruel sentence. He told Pliny, that he perfectly approved of what he had done. He also directed him not to make any search after the Christians; in no case to listen to anonymous accusations; and if the suspected party cleared himself by worshipping the gods, to ask no more questions, but dismiss him. In this, as I have observed, there was an appearance of justice: but he approved of Pliny, who had put persons to death, though they were guilty of no crime, and without the authority of any law: and what is worse than all, he expressly added, that if such persons were brought before him and convicted, they were to be punished, by which he evidently meant, that they were to be put to death.

The character of Trajan has some amiable traits, and we must not judge him too strictly by the rules of that religion which he tried to suppress, but the blessings of which he was ignorant of. His answer to Pliny must however lower him in our opinion as a magistrate and a sovereign. I have said, that it is not correct to ascribe to him any particular persecution: and the notion of putting him the third

on the list of persecutors after Nero and Domitian, is certainly untenable, if it be meant that he instituted, like those monsters, a systematic attack upon Christianity. He perhaps had thought little of the Christians before Pliny consulted him, and he may not have considered the effect which his answer was to have. Unfortunately he had given a permission, which less humane or reflecting magistrates than Pliny soon construed into a law. There can be little doubt that the priests and the sellers of victims were the instigators of the cruelty, which Pliny fancied himself compelled to countenance. The Christians had reduced them to beggary, and nothing but vigorous measures could reinstate them as before. Pliny was perhaps sincere in his attachment to the gods of his country. Trajan may have had similar feelings: and his own honours seemed to be compromised, if the Christians were allowed to absent themselves from the solemnities of religion. If the temporary revival of paganism could have been effected without cruelty to the Christians, we might find an excuse for those persons who were influenced by their own notions of piety. But this was necessarily impossible: and it is painful to reflect, that two such persons as Pliny and Trajan should be the first to establish a cruel and iniquitous system, which caused Christian blood to flow for two centuries. I cannot however close this Lecture without remarking, that if the progress of the Gospel was checked for a time by the measures of Pliny, the effect did not last long. We have the evidence of Lucian, that during the reign of M. Aurelius, that is, about the middle of the second century, there were great numbers of Christians in

A. D.
111.

A. D. Pontus^f: and since this country was under the
111. government of the proprætor of Bithynia, the successors of Pliny were either more indulgent, or their intolerance was followed, as is generally the case, by the increase of the opinions which they endeavoured to suppress.

^f Pseudomant. c. 25.

LECTURE XV.

THOUGH the date of Pliny's letter to Trajan, as A. D.
111.
I have already stated, remains uncertain, there can be no doubt that it was addressed to him while he was at Rome; and if we place it in the year 111, there is ample time for his victories in the East to have been achieved, and for him once more to have visited his capital. We are still in the same ignorance as to any events which brought him personally in contact with the Christians at Rome. We may at least suppose that he acted upon the spirit of his own injunctions to Pliny, and did not allow any search to be made after the Christians. There is certainly no evidence of any particular persecution of them at Rome during the present reign. The church in that city was now under the direction of Alexander, (according to Eusebius,) who had succeeded Evarestus in the year 109, or perhaps a little earlier; but the more modern or shorter scheme of chronology assigns the bishopric of Rome at this time to Telesphorus.

Trajan perhaps continued two or three years in Rome; and the remainder of his reign was spent, like the former part, in distant and perilous wars. He perhaps set out a second time to invade Parthia in 114, and his conquests in Assyria furnish much matter for the Roman historian. They need not

A. D. 114. however detain us in tracing the fortunes of the Christians: but a war broke out in another quarter towards the close of this emperor's reign, which must have been painfully interesting to the Christians at the time, and which gives room for a few remarks.

It seems to have been about the end of this same year 114, that a rising of the Jews took place in several countries at once^a. We are not accurately informed as to the cause of this commotion; and perhaps we need look no farther than the vast increase of their numbers, and the bitterness which a conquered people feels against its conquerors. The Jews no longer existed as a nation, and Palestine was not now the focus of their discontent. They were particularly numerous in Egypt and Cyrene, and the present storm was raised in the

A. D. 115. latter country. It was in the year 115, that the war openly broke out. The Jewish leader, according to Eusebius, was Lucuas, though Dio calls him Andrew, and it is uncertain whether they were different names of the same person. Under one or both of these commanders, the Jews in Cyrene rose against the Greek and Roman inhabitants, and massacred as many as 220,000. Many who escaped their fury took refuge in Egypt; and the Jews of Alexandria, who had perhaps diminished their numbers by assisting the insurgents in Cyrene, were now too few for their heathen opponents, and suffered in their turn similar barbarities. Lupus was at this time prefect of Egypt, and the measures which he directed against the Alexandrian Jews

^a Dio, LXVIII. 32. p. 1145. Eus. *H. E.* IV. 2.

cannot fail to have been fatal also to many Christians. Even in pacific times they were confounded with the Jews, and during the present excitement they were little likely to escape. There is evidence, that the Christians of Alexandria had not only been increasing in numbers, but the same learning which had distinguished the Alexandrian Jews above their other countrymen, was also beginning to shew itself in Christian schools. Primus was now at the head of the church in that city, having succeeded Cerdon in the year 109: and though nothing is known of his history beyond the dates of his accession and death, we cannot doubt that he and his flock were exposed to much suffering by the insurrection of the Jews.

A. D.
115.

Trajan was pursuing his conquests in the East, when he heard of these disturbances, and he despatched a land and naval force under M. Turbo to repress them. This commander, who seems to have superseded Lupus, and to have possessed more activity, soon put an end to the war. The Jews of Cyrene had entered Egypt, and had carried devastation through many districts, when they were met by the Roman forces, and defeated in a succession of engagements. Many thousand Jews from Cyrene and Egypt were slaughtered, and the country for a time was pacified. The same scene was also acted in Cyprus. The Jews had risen in that island, as in Cyrene, and apparently, taking the inhabitants unprepared, had destroyed the city of Salamis, and put 240,000 of them to the sword. Their leader's name was Artemion: but this first success was as fatal to them as their massacres in Africa. They were finally expelled from the island, and a law was

A. D. 115. passed, which made it a capital offence for any Jew to set his foot on it; or if a storm happened to drive him on the coast, he was to be put to death.

The misfortunes of the Jews did not stop here. Trajan seems to have been well acquainted with their turbulent and obstinate disposition. His father, as I have mentioned, had served in the Jewish war under Titus: and he himself, during his campaigns in the East, must have noticed their formidable numbers. The country between the Euphrates and Tigris swarmed with them, to the amount of many hundred thousands; and Trajan was justly suspicious, that they might rise, like their brethren in Africa, and overpower the other inhabitants. He accordingly ordered L. Quietus^b to drive them from that province; which perhaps meant, that he was to put to death as many as shewed symptoms of rebellion. The commission was not executed without a pitched battle, and a great slaughter of the Jews; for which success Quietus was rewarded with the government of Judæa, as lieutenant of the emperor; for the office of procurator had ceased upon the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. We are not told, whether he found the same insurrectionary spirit among the Jews of Palestine. It is probable that symptoms had appeared, which required the presence of an able and determined officer; and if measures of severity were found necessary, the Christians were not likely altogether to escape. There is some reason to think, that the church at Jerusalem was exposed during this period to persecution. At least the succession of bishops

^b He is so called by Eusebius, Rufinus, and Nicephorus. Dio writes Quintus Lusius.

was extremely rapid, and might lead us to suspect, that their deaths were hastened by some calamity. A. D.
115.
We have seen that Justus succeeded Symeon in 107, and he appears himself to have been succeeded by Zacchæus in 112. Between that year and 125, which is a period of only thirteen years, Eusebius mentions five other bishops, whose names were Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthias, and Philip; which forms a striking contrast with the thirty years that the see was occupied by James, and the forty-five years that it was occupied by Symeon.

An anecdote is preserved by Suidas^c, which, if true, would probably refer to this period. He says, that Tiberianus, who commanded in Palestine, informed the emperor, that he found himself unequal to putting the Christians to death, and that Trajan issued an order to stop the persecution. That Trajan felt great hostility to the Jews, is remarked by Dio Cassius: and we have seen that, toward the end of his reign, he had some grounds for this feeling. It is very possible therefore, that he may have instructed his commanders in Palestine to have recourse to severity, and if so, the Christians, as I have observed, would come in for their share. They would be likely indeed to suffer more than the other Jews, if the usual test of loyalty was applied, and they were required to offer worship to an image of the emperor. No Jew would have obeyed this mandate without abhorrence; and when converted to Christianity, their scruples would perhaps have been increased: so that a mild commander might have

^c Voc. *Τραιανός*. It is also in the Chronicon of Joannes Malala. See Dodwell, *Diss. Cy-*

prian. II. thes. 23. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 433.

A. D. 115. felt the difficulty, which Tiberianus is said to have expressed to the emperor. The anecdote, however, is generally rejected; and there can be no doubt, that the letter which is extant upon this subject is a forgery^d: but the fact of Trajan having issued an order to stop the persecution of the Christians is also reported by Sulpitius Severus, who says, that after the emperor had examined them by torture, and found in them nothing which deserved death or punishment, he prohibited any further cruelties being used. The two passages might easily be made to refer to the same event^e, and it would be interesting to know, that Trajan had issued a special edict in favour of the Christians: but when the fact itself is unsupported by other authority, and no mark of time is added, we can perhaps hardly believe that the edict itself had been seen by either of these writers.

The disturbances in Palestine certainly continued some time: for we find M. Turbo, who had defeated the Jews in Africa, succeeding Quietus in the beginning of the following reign, and completing the subjection of the country. Trajan, in the meanwhile, was beginning to experience those reverses, which throw such a shade over the close of his military career. One conquered province after another revolted: he was repulsed in a personal attack upon Atræ; and before his death, which happened at Selinus in Cilicia, in 117, nearly all his conquests in the East were lost. The progress of Christianity therefore could

^d It is given by Usher in the Appendix to his edition of Ignatius. The story is rejected by Dodwell, *Diss. XI. Cyprian.*

and Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 118.

^e This was done by Jo. Maleta, p. 356. ed. Oxon, 1691.

have attracted little of his attention, during the latter years of his reign; and if his officers molested the Christians in Judæa, it was not in the first instance on account of their religion. Eusebius remarks, that, while this succession of evils was falling upon the Jews, the affairs of the Christians were daily becoming more flourishing; an expression, which is perhaps rather rhetorical; but if we understand it to mean, that the Gospel was daily gaining ground, and spreading into new countries, it is doubtless strictly true, and by no means incompatible with accounts of partial persecutions. The death of Alexander, bishop of Rome, is placed by some writers in 116, the year preceding Trajan's death, and he is said to have suffered martyrdom^f: from which it might be inferred, that the Christians in that city were more than usually exposed to the malice of their enemies: but the accounts of his death cannot be strictly depended upon; and while Eusebius places it three years later, without saying any thing of his martyrdom, Pearson and others suppose him to have died at the beginning of the century. In whatever year his death happened, he was succeeded by Xystus.

A. D.
117.

Hadrian was at Antioch, when he succeeded to the empire upon the death of Trajan, having been adopted by him but a short time before, and having attended him in his last and unsuccessful campaigns. His reign began with what was perhaps considered a disgraceful circumstance, the abandonment of the

^f See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 132. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 474. Alexander is said, by Prædestinatus, (I. 16.) to have written a book against Heracleon, a disciple of Valen-

tinus, but it was probably some other Alexander, who lived later, if the whole story is not a fiction. See Grabe, *Spicileg. Sæc. II.* p. 81.

A. D.
117.

country to the east of the Euphrates : but it might be doubted, whether the empire was really weakened by its limits being contracted. In the following year he went to Rome : and if we may believe the martyrologies, he commenced a persecution of the Christians, or rather fomented that which was already set on foot. It was now that Placidus, whom I have already mentioned^g as distinguished in the Jewish and Dacian wars, and who must have been extremely old, if his identity could be established, is said to have been martyred. It has been asserted also that Telesphorus, who was bishop of Rome, and whose death was certainly a violent one, suffered in this same year^h ; but a much later date is generally assigned to this event.

A. D.
119.

The arrival of the new emperor at Rome, and the solemnities attending upon it, were not unlikely to cause trouble to the Christians. Hadrian also would come with his mind strongly prejudiced against the Jews ; and he seems, like his predecessor, to have been a zealous adherent to the religion of his country. There are, however, no grounds for supposing a general persecution to have happened in this year : and in 119, which was the year following, he set out upon his travels into distant countries. He appears first to have sailed to Syria, and, after visiting Antioch and Phœnicia, to have reached Judæa. The turbulent disposition of the Jews was perhaps one of the causes, which made him travel in this direction. If they were subdued for a time, they were only kept down by a strong military force ; and the emperor, when he arrived among them, treated them as a conquered people. Many of them were openly

^g Lecture XIII. p. 11. ^h Baratier, *de Success. Pontif. Rom.* p. 93.

A. D.
119.

sold as slaves; and it was rather to insult them in their subjection, than to strengthen his power against them, that he erected a town, with buildings after the Roman fashion, on the ancient site of Jerusalemⁱ. It is generally stated, that *Ælia Capitolina* was built several years later, when Hadrian had suppressed the more formidable revolt of the Jews under Barcochebas. It is true, that the town was then newly built and colonized, and the name of *Ælia* substituted for that of Jerusalem: but it seems satisfactorily proved, that the erection of heathen buildings by Hadrian on this spot was the cause, rather than the consequence, of that revolt^k. It has been said by some writers, that Hadrian first destroyed Jerusalem, and then rebuilt it. But this is perhaps a mistake. Though it had a respectable population of Jewish and Christian inhabitants, it had not become a place of any importance since its utter destruction by Titus. It was probably without walls, and no attempt had been made to restore the temple, or any of the public buildings. Hadrian built a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the very site of the national sanctuary, and the inhabitants, whom he introduced, were Greeks and Romans. This was a wanton insult on the part of the conqueror, and only caused the Jews to wait for a signal of revolt^l. We are again without any evidence

ⁱ Eutychius says, that Hadrian was advised to go to Jerusalem for his health, and that, finding no buildings there except those of the Christians, he ordered the town to be rebuilt. *Annal.* vol. i. p. 352. ed. Oxon. 1658.

^k Valesius ad Eus. *H. E.* IV.

6. Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 121, 134.

^l It might be inferred from a passage in Spartian, (*Hadrian.* c. 14.) that the Jews were forbidden to circumcise their children. Hadrian perhaps wished to keep the Jews quiet, by destroying their national character.

A.D. 119. as to the effect of Hadrian's visit upon the Christians in Jerusalem. If the rapid succession of their bishops, to which I have before alluded^m, was owing to their being put to death, they must have suffered severely about this period. But their old enemies, the unconverted Jews, were not now in a state to harass them. Both parties were rather fellow-sufferers in the same cause: and it is more probable, that the jealousy of the Roman governor, and the measures which he took for suppressing rebellion, would account for the bishops of Jerusalem occupying their sees for so short a time.

From Jerusalem the emperor proceeded to Alexandria, where again he would be struck with the necessity of keeping the Jews in subjection. Their late insurrection had begun in Africa, and the contest was no where carried on more violently than in Alexandria. The heathen inhabitants, as I have already stated, succeeded in overpowering the Jews, but the struggle between them laid great part of the city in ruins. Hadrian ordered it to be rebuiltⁿ: and if he superintended the work himself, (which he was likely to do, since he was vain of his taste in architecture,) he perhaps spent part of the following year, 120, in Alexandria. An inquisitive mind, like
A.D. 120. Hadrian's, could hardly fail to have taken some notice of the Christians, who existed in considerable numbers in that city. We know that he noticed them in a subsequent visit to Egypt, and wherever he travelled, he seems to have been particularly observant of the religion of the people. He had discharged the duties of Pontifex Maximus at Rome: and one historian^o describes him as extremely atten-

^m Page 53.

ⁿ Eus. *in Chron.*

^o Spartianus, 22.

tive in preserving the national religion. It is added, that he looked upon all foreign religions with contempt, and he perhaps treated the Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian creeds with equal indifference. There is no evidence, however, that the Christians were sufferers by his residence in Alexandria. The bishopric of that church became vacant in 120 by the death of Primus, who was succeeded by Justus : but there is no reason to suppose that Primus suffered martyrdom. A. D.
120.

If great part of Alexandria had continued in ruins since 114, and the two parties of Jews and heathen were still exasperated against each other, the city must in great measure have lost its attraction to those who had before frequented it for the sake of study. I have already observed^p, that the eclectic philosophy took its rise in Alexandria. The Ptolemies invited learned men from every quarter to their court : and the Jews, who were settled there in great numbers, formed a literary intercourse with the Platonists, and both parties modified their own opinions from each other. The connexion of the Jews with Babylon and Persia introduced a third set of doctrines, which were highly mystical and extravagant : and the mixture of these three systems, the Jewish, the Platonic, and the Persian, seems to account in the most probable way for the rise of Gnosticism. Simon Magus, who was a contemporary of the Apostles, is said to have studied in Alexandria ; and he gave to this heterogeneous philosophy a new character by engrafting upon it, though in a corrupted form, the leading features of the Gospel. The Docetæ, or those Gnostics who believed the body of

^p Lecture III. p. 75.

A. D. 120. Jesus to be a phantom, are generally traced to Simon Magus as their founder; and they were becoming numerous in the latter part of the first century. The immediate successor of Simon was Menander, who, like himself, was a native of Samaria, and Antioch was one of the places where he made a great impression by his skill in magic^q. Among other delusions, he persuaded many of his followers that they were not to die. The date of this impostor is not fixed by any ancient writer: but he must at least have been in existence before the death of St. John, and we ought perhaps to place him in the reigns of Domitian and Trajan^r.

Menander had two successors, Basilides and Saturninus; the former of whom distinguished himself in Alexandria, the latter in Antioch: but when they are said to have been successors of Menander, we are not perhaps bound to understand that they studied under him, or were personally connected with him. This may have been the case, and is not improbable: but they would have been called the successors of Menander, if they lived a few years later, and obtained the chief distinction among the professors of Gnosticism. Basilides and Saturninus seem to have been contemporaries: but the former rose to much the greatest eminence; and what I have said concerning him agrees very well with the earliest account which we have of his date, that he appeared in the reign of Hadrian^s.

I have not met with the remark in any other

^q Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I. 26. Vespasian, *Hist. Eccl. Sæc. I.* p. 59. *Synops.* c. IX. Art. 2.

^r Natalis Alexander places ^s Clem. Alex. *Strom.* VII. 17. him earlier, in the reign of p. 898.

writer, but it appears to me highly probable, that the contests between the Jews and heathen in Alexandria, which began in 114, and which laid the city in ruins, were the cause of the tenets of Basilides becoming more generally known. He had perhaps been at the head of a party in that city for some time^t: and his wild theories in religion, added to his proficiency in magic, were likely to attract many followers: but the studies of a philosopher (if this term may be applied to a Gnostic) were likely to be interrupted, when the streets were a constant scene of bloodshed; and the Gnostics adopted so much of Judaism, as well as of Christianity, that they were in no small danger, while a war of extermination was carried on between the two parties. Basilides perhaps withdrew from Alexandria to some safer residence. He is charged with denying the necessity of martyrdom^u, and with allowing his followers to escape it by partaking of meats which had been offered to idols^x; a charge which, as we have seen, was brought generally against all the Gnostics. But a compromise of this kind might not have saved him in the present excited state of the heathen inhabitants; and I should conjecture, that he left Alexandria, by which means his tenets became more generally known in the world at large.

We have thus fixed the notoriety of the Basilidian Gnostics to the year 114 or 115, though their leader may have been arranging his system some years be-

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^t Baronius and Pearson supposed Basilides to have begun his heresy in the first century. *script.* 46. p. 220. Epiphani. *Hær.* XXIV. 4. p. 71.

^u Origen. *in Matt.* vol. III. p. 856. Pseudo-Tertull. *de Præ-* ^x Iren. I. 24. 5. p. 102. Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* I. 4. p. 195.

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120.

fore. The reader, who is only acquainted with the modern use of the term *heresy*, will be surprised to find the Gnostics spoken of as heretics. But such is the invariable usage of the early ecclesiastical writers : and Gnosticism borrowed so largely from the Gospel as well as from Judaism, that its professors were often confounded with the Christians; and what is worse, many real Christians, as the Apostles had foretold, began in the second century to go over to the Gnostics. The leading feature of this extravagant theology was to acknowledge the divinity of Christ, but not of Jesus. Christ, who was an emanation from God, was united with Jesus at his baptism, but he neither became incarnate at his birth, nor expired with him on the cross. This doctrine, therefore, though it confirms in a remarkable manner the preexistence and divinity of Christ, entirely destroyed the notion of his atonement. Jesus Christ was merely a preacher of righteousness, sent into the world to reveal the knowledge of the true God, and to free mankind from the tyranny of the Demiurgus, or the Evil Principle. This is a clue to the whole mystery of Gnosticism: and the various modifications of it, as taught in this century, by Basilides, Cerdon, Marcion, and Valentinus, consisted mostly in the number and arrangement of the successive Æons, or Emanations, which were supposed to have proceeded from the first Cause.

Basilides is said to have been one of the first persons who adopted the Oriental notion of two Principles; and there certainly was some resemblance between his system and that of the Persian Magi. But this was common to all the Gnostics. They held, that the world was created, not by the

supreme God, the author of good, but by a Being, who, proceeding originally from Him, but by successive emanations, was the author of all evil. This Being was known by the name of Demiurgus: but it will be seen, that the supreme God and the Demiurgus were not altogether the same with the Ormuzd and Ahreman of the Persians; and the evidence is very slight, which would lead us to think that Basilides had studied in the East. Irenæus represents him as not satisfied with the tenets of Simon Magus and Menander, but as carrying his speculations much farther, and building up a still more mystical and complicated theology. It was probably the origin of matter and of evil, which led him into these absurdities. Such questions had been agitated for many years in the schools of Alexandria; and Basilides laboured, like his predecessors, to account for the existence of evil by some new hypothesis, without ascribing it to God. The Christians in Alexandria were sufficiently numerous for him to learn from them the leading tenets of the Gospel: and he boasted of being instructed in these points by Glaucias, who had been the personal attendant of St. Peter. This may or may not have been true; and the date, which I have ascribed to Basilides, would allow him to have conversed with many persons who had seen some of the Apostles. He is said to have had some followers, who assumed the character of prophets^y: and we might suppose that he did this in imitation of what he had seen or heard among the Christians. The most extraordinary invention, which is ascribed to him as con-

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120.

^y Eus. *H. E.* IV. 7.

A. D. 120. nected with the Gospel, is the notion that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus. He would have heard it asserted by the other Docetæ that the body of Jesus was a phantom, and this is said to have been his own opinion : but he perhaps could not resist the evidence of the Evangelists, that a real and substantial body was nailed to the cross : he accordingly invented the absurd hypothesis, that the appearance of Jesus was transferred to Simon of Cyrene, who was thus crucified in his stead, while Christ returned to the Pleroma, from which he had originally descended. The name of Basilides, more than that of any of the Gnostics, has been connected with the use of magical charms and incantations. A belief in the transmigration of souls, which he had probably imbibed in the Platonic schools of Alexandria, will complete this hasty sketch of the tenets of Basilides. He has been charged with maintaining an indifference of human actions ; a principle which Carpocrates and other Gnostics seem unquestionably to have entertained : and it is not denied, that there were some Basilidians in Alexandria, who indulged without restraint in the grossest impurities : but we learn from the same authority, that the founders of their sect did not encourage them in these practices.

Basilides was an author, and published a work, which he called the Gospel. He also wrote twenty-four books explanatory of the Gospel : but whether it was a comment upon his own production, or upon the writings of the four Evangelists, we are not informed^z. His works were answered and refuted

^z See Grabe, *Spicileg. Sæc. II.* p. 37.

by Christian writers, and Eusebius^a has preserved the name of Agrippa Castor, who appears to have lived in the reign of Hadrian. This is an interesting fact, as shewing, that Christianity was now embraced by men of learning, who ventured openly to publish their opinions to the world; and though the tenets of Basilides would rather be looked upon now as the ravings of a madman, than the serious lucubrations of a philosopher, it was at that time no light task for a Christian to enter the lists against one who had attracted a party in the schools of Alexandria. Basilides died about twenty years after the time which I have assigned to the general diffusion of his opinions, and he left a son, Isidorus, who likewise defended them in his writings^b.

At the same time that Basilides was gaining followers in Alexandria, Saturninus, or Saturnilus, was propagating opinions equally mysterious and irrational in Antioch. He likewise is said to have been a successor of Menander: and if he held peculiar opinions concerning the origin of evil, they seem to have consisted in his ascribing the creation of good and bad men to separate agents. The world and the first parents of mankind were created by seven angels; and the Almighty, who was pleased with the work, gave to these human beings a rational soul: but Satan, who presided over Matter, being enraged at this interference with his power, created another race of human beings, who were evil, and gave them souls^c. The notion held by Saturninus

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120.

^a H. E. iv. 7.

collected by Grabe, *Spicileg. Sæc. II.* p. 64.

^b Concerning Basilides, I would refer to my Bampton Lectures, note 13. Fragments of the writings of Isidorus are

^c See Mosheim, *de Rebus ante Const. Cent. II.* c. 44.

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120.

concerning Christ, and his being sent into the world to free mankind from the dominion of evil, was nearly the same with that of Basilides. There is however no reason to suspect him of the same licentiousness of conduct, which was practised by the followers of the latter heretic. On the contrary, he is said to have enjoined a life of the greatest abstinence: and since one of the chief distinctions in the Gnostics consisted in their indulging or mortifying their appetites, it is possible that Basilides and Saturninus may have been mentioned as heads of parties from this circumstance, rather than from any essential difference in their speculations.

It is perhaps remarkable, that these two heretics perfected their systems in Alexandria and Antioch, both of which cities contained a large body of Christians. The epistles of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, contain evident allusions to the doctrines of the Gnostics, and it is possible that he may have come in contact with Saturninus. But the interpolator of his Epistles does not seem to have heard of such a tradition, since he makes him mention Basilides by name, while he takes no notice of Saturninus, who propagated his doctrines in the bishop's own city. It is perhaps more probable, that Saturninus had not risen into notice when Ignatius was martyred in the year 107; and if so, the church of Antioch was under the care of Heros, when Saturninus became known as the leader of a party.

I have stated, that it was in the year 119 that the emperor Hadrian left Rome, and visited Judæa and Alexandria. He perhaps wintered in the latter city; and it is uncertain whether he returned to Rome in the following year. He was certainly in

his capital early in 121, when he celebrated the A. D.
121.
Quinquennalia, or fifth anniversary of his accession to the empire; on which occasion the feast called Parilia, in honour of the foundation of Rome, was observed with particular splendour, and the emperor dedicated a temple to the Fortune of the City. I have said, that these festivities were generally fatal to the Christians: and there is some evidence, though liable perhaps to be questioned, that they were at this time exposed to persecution. The martyrdom of Symphorosa and her sons, which seems to rest on credible authority^d, is referred by some persons to this period. Her husband Getulius had been put to death some time before for refusing to sacrifice to the Gods: and his widow now shewed equal firmness, and met with a similar fate. The emperor had built a magnificent villa, the ruins of which may still be seen, near to Tivoli; and the dedication was accompanied, as usual, with sacrifices and other invocations of the Gods. The priests persuaded the emperor that the Gods would not be satisfied, till Symphorosa and her family were compelled to offer sacrifice; and he accordingly ordered her into his presence, and gave her the alternative of compliance or death. The conference ended in her suffering martyrdom; and her seven sons, who were equally steady in refusing to sacrifice, were condemned to different tortures on the following day.

If we admit this story to be true, we are not bound to believe that Hadrian had ordered any special persecution of the Christians. Dio states,

^d See Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum*. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 135.

A. D. 121. that he put several persons to death at the beginning of his reign, and in the present instance he certainly shewed deliberate cruelty: but the priests seem to have been the principal movers in the affair; and perhaps many such cases occurred, while the emperor was in Rome, and making himself popular by festivals and solemnities. We learn from the account of this martyrdom, that it was followed by a cessation of persecution for a year and a half; and the emperor must have left Rome early in the year to prosecute his travels in distant countries.

Hadrian appears to have been led by curiosity, as well as by any motives of war or politics, to visit in person the remoter parts of his empire; and he travelled during this year with extraordinary rapidity. He traversed Gaul and Britain, in the latter of which countries he raised a wall of eighty miles in length, from the mouth of the Tyne to the firth of Solway; he then returned to Gaul, and passed the winter in Spain. We know little of his adventures during this journey; and it is not likely that we should learn much of the state of Christianity in the countries which he visited: though there is evidence, as we shall see presently, that in every one of them, even in Britain, the Gospel had already made considerable progress. We are told indeed, that when he was passing from Italy into Gaul, he was met by Italicus, the governor of Rhætia, who reported to him the obstinacy of the Christians in not sacrificing to the Gods, and obtained from him an order, that if they continued their refusal, they should be put to death. It is added, that the emperor summoned some Christians into his pre-

sence while he was at Brescia, and ordered them to be exposed to wild beasts; but that several persons of rank were converted to the Gospel by seeing these victims escape unhurt. This miraculous circumstance will perhaps throw an air of suspicion over the whole story: but still there is a precision in it as to facts, which might incline us to believe, that some Christians in the north of Italy were persecuted for their religion while the emperor was passing through the country. Some of them are said to have suffered at Milan, and others to have been sent to Rome; and these latter persons found traces of the persecution which had lately been harassing their brethren in the capital. It was perhaps beginning to subside: but the bishop of Rome and some of his flock were still concealing themselves in the catacombs^e: and whatever we may think of the martyrdoms in the north of Italy, there is the most convincing evidence, that these excavations in the neighbourhood of Rome were used as hiding-places by the early Christians. The church of Rome has preserved many marvellous and incredible particulars concerning these catacombs, and it is not necessary to believe that all the bones, which have been found in them, are Christian relics: but the places themselves are still open to inspection; they were evidently used for the ordinances of religion as well as for concealment: and if we can hardly doubt that the Christians of Rome were exposed to persecution in the reign of Hadrian,

A. D.
121.

^e In the Acts of some of these martyrs, Telesphorus is mentioned as the bishop of Rome, who was concealing himself in the catacombs, and, according to Eusebius, he sat from 129 to 138. Pearson however places his appointment in 111, and Baratier in 108.

A. D. we may believe that they had already found the
121. convenience of sheltering themselves in the catacombs. We have also the evidence of inscriptions, that they occasionally deposited their dead in these excavations^f: and the superstitious reverence, which in later times was paid to the relics of the martyrs, was perhaps owing in some measure to the living and the dead being thus brought closely into contact, and to the necessity of the same place being used at once for the offices of devotion and for burial. There is however no evidence, that any thing approaching to religious worship was offered to these relics in the second century.

The accounts which we have of Hadrian's travels for the next three years, do not throw much light upon the history of the church. He was more than once at Athens, traversed nearly the whole of Asia Minor, visited Egypt, and probably Judæa. In most of these countries, particularly in Egypt, he would see a variety of superstitions, and he was evidently a close observer of these peculiarities. It is probable also, that in many places he witnessed the sufferings of the Christians. I have mentioned more than once the rapid succession of bishops in the church of Jerusalem; and Philip, who was the eighth bishop in a period of eighteen years, was succeeded about the year 125 by Seneca. Though these names are Greek or Roman, we know that up to this time the bishops of Jerusalem were Jews; and there is too much reason to fear, that the deaths of some of them were hastened by the malice of their enemies. We cannot however connect these

^f Hartmannus, *de Rebus gestis Christianorum sub Apostolis*, c. XIV. p. 357.

scenes of cruelty with the presence of Hadrian in A. D.
Judæa ; but we know that in two different parts 121.
of the empire, in Africa and in Greece, the Chris-
tians were exposed to very severe sufferings ; and I
shall begin the following Lecture with describing
what took place when the emperor visited Athens.

LECTURE XVI.

A. D. 122. **H**ADRIAN paid two visits to Greece in the year 122, and passed the winter in Athens. There is evidence of his being initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, though the time of his performing this ceremony is not certain: and I mention the fact, as confirming what I have already remarked, that he paid particular attention to matters of religion.

A. D. 125. He perhaps was not initiated till the year 125, when he went again to Athens, after having made a tour of nearly two years in Asia Minor. There is reason to think, that during the whole of this time the Christians in Athens were exposed to persecution; and curiosity is excited to know the fate of the Gospel in the most learned and superstitious city of Greece. There was certainly a congregation of Christians established there, when St. Paul left it in the year 46; but we cannot tell how soon it possessed what may properly be called a church, consisting of ministers under one spiritual head^a. The fact of a man of rank and learning, like Dionysius the Areopagite, being among the first Athenian converts, is very remarkable; and I have

^a The Roman Martyrology (Octob. iv.) mentions Hierotheus, a disciple of St. Paul, who suffered martyrdom. He is said to have been a Platonic philosopher, and to have preceded Dionysius in governing the church of Athens.

already alluded to the respectable evidence for the church of Athens being entrusted to his care. I have also observed, that the time of his death is very differently reported; some fixing his martyrdom in the reign of Domitian, and others in that of Hadrian. It is unnecessary to add, that the former date is much the most probable.

The next person, whom we meet with as bishop of Athens, is Publius, who suffered martyrdom, and was succeeded by Quadratus^b; but the date of the death of Publius is uncertain, some persons placing it at the time of Hadrian's visit to Athens, and others much later, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius^c. There is positive evidence that the Athenian Christians were suffering molestation from their enemies at the time that Hadrian was in Greece^d; and during one of his visits to Athens a defence of Christianity was written and presented to him by Quadratus. This is the first of those interesting works, which, under the name of Apologies or Defences, were addressed by the more learned of the Christians to their heathen governors, and it is much to be regretted that this work of Quadratus is lost. Eusebius has preserved a small fragment of it, from which we learn that the writer had seen persons who had been miraculously cured by our Saviour; or at least that some of these persons had lived to what might be called his own times. This is perfectly possible, if Quadratus presented this apology about the year 125, or a little earlier. Jerom speaks of Quadratus as a disciple of

A. D.
125.

^b Dionys. Corinth. *apud Eus. H. E. IV. 23.* Hieron. *de Script. Eccles.*

^c Le Sueur placed it in 113. *Hist. de l'Eglise*, ad an. 113.

^d Eus. *H. E. IV. 3.*

A. D.
125.

the Apostles^e; and if he was not literally instructed by any of the Apostles, which might perhaps be doubted, he certainly lived at that early period in the second century, which is called by ecclesiastical writers *the first succession of the Apostles*. Though he presented his Apology to Hadrian, he is properly mentioned by Eusebius^f as flourishing in the reign of Trajan, and he was probably born before the end of the first century. A writer of the second century^g has preserved the interesting fact, that Quadratus possessed that preternatural influence of the Spirit, which was certainly felt by the first converts of the Apostles, and which must have been exercised by some persons at least who survived the last of the Apostles. We are not informed as to the manner or extent, in which this remnant of spiritual gifts was displayed: but the fact of it having been imparted to Quadratus was notorious; and he appears also to have promoted the cause of the Gospel by the aid of human learning.

On the whole I should be inclined to infer, that Quadratus was not bishop of Athens, when he presented his Apology to the emperor^h; but for the time it produced a favourable result, and was the cause of the persecution being stopped. Aristides also, another Christian of Athens, and a philosopher,

^e *Epist. LXX. 4. ad Magnum. Catal.*

^f *H. E. III. 37.*

^g *Apud Eus. H. E. V. 17.* Nicolaus Lyranus (in *Apoc. iii. 7.*) says that this Quadratus was the bishop of Philadelphia, to whom St. John wrote: but he gives no author-

ity, and it is probably a mistake.

^h There are doubts, whether the person who presented the apology, and the bishop of Athens, were the same person. The affirmative is maintained by Cave and Grabe, the negative by Valesius, Du Pin, Tillemont.

composed a similar work about the same period ⁱ, which he dedicated to Hadrian; and we may suppose that from these two works the emperor would form a different notion of Christianity from that which he had collected from its interested enemies. It is probable also, that he received another communication about this same period, which required him to consider the calumnies against the Christians, and which led him to issue an edict in their favour.

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125.

Serenus Granius ^k, the proconsul of Asia, had written him a letter, which is unfortunately lost, but in which he appears to have asked for instructions as to the mode of treating the Christians. He seems to have been a humane and equitable magistrate; and he remarked upon the injustice of putting the Christians to death, merely to gratify the clamours of the populace, and for no actual crime. There is too good reason to conclude, that the order which was given by Trajan in his reply to Pliny, was acted upon with a strictness and severity which were not originally contemplated. Trajan had allowed the Christians to be punished, merely as Christians. All that he required was the name of the accuser, and an admission of the fact: and nothing more was wanting to gratify the malice of the heathen priests and their dependents. It was easy to raise the cry of the people on their side. The rabble in a Roman or Grecian city could not be better pleased, than to have a supply of victims always ready for the wild beasts in the circus. The Christians were condemned to this savage butchery:

ⁱ Eus. *H. E.* IV. 3. Hieron. ^k See Nic. Antonius, *Bib. de Script. Eccles. et Epist. lioth. Hisp. vet.* p. 95.
LXX. *ad Magnum.*

A. D.
125.

and if any public calamity had happened, the multitude was persuaded that the wrath of Heaven would be appeased, if the Christians were put to death¹. The magistrates, who succeeded Pliny, had perhaps made themselves popular by yielding to the shouts of the people, and giving up the Christians to amuse them in the amphitheatre : but Granius felt scruples in acting upon an edict, which was so manifestly cruel and unjust ; and there is reason to think that he made his application to Hadrian about the same time that the apologies were presented to him at Athens.

Hadrian appears to have taken time in sending his answer ; and it was addressed, not to Granius, who had now quitted his command, but to Minucius Fundanus^m, who had succeeded him as proconsul of Asia. The answer is preserved by Justin Martyrⁿ, and may be considered the second positive edict or rescript of an emperor concerning the Christians. A similar letter was sent to several other persons^o, probably to the proconsuls of the different provinces ; and if the emperor's instructions were followed, the condition of the Christians was considerably improved. Trajan had required the name of the accuser to be affixed to his accusation, but the magistrate might act upon the receipt of this, and punish the party with death. Hadrian now ordered, that both parties should be heard before the

¹ Tertull. *Apol.* 40. p. 32.

^m He is perhaps the person to whom Pliny addressed two Epistles, IV. 15 : VI. 6 : in the first he speaks of Fundanus as consul for the next year. He may also be the person ad-

dressed by Seneca, (*de Tranquil. Animi*,) and one of the speakers in Plutarch's dialogue *de cohib. Ira*.

ⁿ *Apol.* I. 69. p. 84.

^o Melito, *apud Eus. H. E.* IV. 26.

tribunal: and, what was more important, it was necessary that some positive violation of the laws should be proved, and thus a Christian would be punished, not merely as a Christian, but as a transgressor of the laws. There is little doubt, that this more moderate edict was evaded, and magistrates might put a different construction upon the laws which affected the introduction of new religions: but they could not now condemn a Christian to the lions, because the people were impatient, and the shows in the amphitheatre were waiting. Hadrian expressed himself very strongly against wanton and malicious informations; and a person now ran some risk, who summoned a Christian to meet him in a court of justice. It is asserted by a later writer^p, that the persecution did not cease till after three years; which perhaps means, that it took this time to persuade the priests and people that the Christians could only be punished for some definite crime: and the former vexatious system may have continued in part for nearly three years.

We have no account of the condition of the Christians in Rome during the four or five years that the emperor was absent. He returned thither from Athens in 125 or 126, and in the latter year he celebrated his Decennalia, or the tenth anniversary of his accession to the empire. If his letter to Fundanus was written before this time, we may hope that the festival passed away without its usual accompaniments of insults and sufferings to the Christians. There is, however, little reason to hope, that Hadrian had as yet paid any attention to the doctrines of Christianity, though he saved the professors

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126.

of it from wanton aggression. While he partly protected them, he probably despised them : and in the travels which occupied him for nearly the remainder of his reign, we find him shewing his attachment still more strongly to the national superstitions. Between the years 126 and 134 he visited Africa, Egypt, Syria, Athens, and some of these places more than once. Wherever he went, there were temples which waited to be dedicated, and not unfrequently he was himself the object of this flattering idolatry. The heathen priests seem to have discovered the emperor's weakness, and to have succeeded for the present in reestablishing their temples and altars, which in the time of Pliny were in danger of being deserted. This triumph of Paganism was likely to be injurious to the Christians, who could hardly suppress their feelings at these degrading superstitions : but Hadrian perhaps assisted the cause of the Gospel by thus seconding the priests, and increasing the number of their Deities. The Christians were now beginning to defend themselves in writing ; and the absurdities of polytheism were rendered more assailable by the zealous endeavours of Hadrian to support it. The deification of his favourite Antinous, who was drowned in the Nile about the year 129, supplied a powerful topic of sarcasm to the Christian apologists^q of the second century : and it is remarkable that, amidst all the efforts of the priests to excite hostility to the Christians, there were very few who ventured to attack them in the field of argument.

A letter has been preserved^r, which was written

^q Justin Martyr, Theophilus, Athenagoras.

^r By Fl. Vopiscus, *vit. Saturnini*.

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129.

by Hadrian, and addressed to Servianus, or Severianus, who was then consul. He held this office for the first time in 129, the same year that Antinous was drowned: and the emperor, who was then at Alexandria, or had lately left it, gives the consul his opinion of the people in that country. The letter is only deserving of notice, as shewing the great ignorance of Hadrian concerning the Christians. He chooses to confound them with the worshippers of Serapis^s; and it is plain that the mixture of religious opinions in Alexandria had attracted his attention. He mentions the Jews, Samaritans, and Christians, and treats them all as impostors and mountebanks; and I should conjecture that *Samaritan* was a name still given to the Gnostics, on account of Simon Magus and Menander, who were natives of Samaria. Hadrian had perhaps no wish to distinguish the Christians from the Gnostics^t; and if the letter was written after the deification of Antinous, he may have been angry with the Christians for refusing to worship his former favourite. We have here his own testimony, though it is not wanted to prove the fact, that the Christians were very numerous in Alexandria: he even speaks of their bishops, which shews that there were other churches in Egypt beside that of the capital: and, with respect to the church of Alexandria, we are told that Eumenes succeeded Justus in that bishopric in the year 131, or not much later.

Another of the principal sees became vacant about

^s See Kortholt *de Calumniis Paganorum*, c. 6.

^t There is evidence, that the Basilidians used the name of

Serapis in their charms and incantations. Montfaucon, *Palæog. Gr.* II. 8.

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129.

the same period. Heros, who had succeeded Ignatius as bishop of Antioch, is stated to have died in 129, and I should hardly have mentioned the circumstance, if there was not reason to believe, that Hadrian was at Antioch in that year, and if it was not asserted by Baronius, that Heros suffered martyrdom. The fact of a bishop being martyred in the presence of the emperor would excite some surprise after the letter which he wrote forbidding the persecution of the Christians: but the martyrdom of Heros does not rest upon any good authority; Eusebius is silent upon the subject: and the emperor appears, for some reason or other, to have been so angry with the people of Antioch^u, that he was not likely to allow them any license in gratifying their malice. It is more likely that Heros, who had held the see for 22 years, met his death peaceably, and the person chosen to succeed him was Cornelius.

Eusebius also makes Telesphorus to have succeeded Xystus as bishop of Rome in the period which we are now considering^x, and some ancient documents have given to Xystus the honours of martyrdom. This however is not stated by the oldest writers: and since some chronologists have placed the death of Xystus much earlier in the second century^y, it is useless to consider whether the year in which he died was marked by a persecution of the Christians. It is more probable that he did not suffer martyrdom; and whatever was the condition of the Roman church, the emperor could have

^u Spartian. *Hadrian*. 14.

in 128 or 129.

^x In the *Chronicon* he places
it in 125, in the *Eccles. Hist.*

^y Baratier in 108. Pearson in 111.

known or thought little about it, since he was absent for such long intervals from the city.

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It appears to have been during some part of his travels in the east, that a law was passed, which materially affected the Christians, though they were not perhaps in the first instance the objects of it. This was called *the perpetual edict*, and was drawn up by Salvius Julianus, a celebrated lawyer, who, with some others of the same profession, was consulted by Hadrian when he was sitting as judge^z. It enacted, that all cities and towns throughout the empire should follow the laws and customs of Rome, instead of their own local regulations, which used to be published at the beginning of each year, and ceased to be in force when the year was ended. Hadrian must have seen the inconvenience of this system in the course of his travels; and the perpetual edict, in a civil point of view, was a great improvement. It is supposed to have been promulgated in the year 131 or 132^a, at which time the emperor appears to have been principally in Greece; and there is no evidence that he intended it to operate to the prejudice of the Christians. It may however have had this tendency, when executed by persons who were enemies of the Gospel. The rule, that all places should follow the laws and customs of Rome, might be construed to mean,*that there should be an uniformity in religious, as well as in civil institutions; and thus the perpetual edict might be made a direct means of harassing the Christians, who

^z Spartian. *Hadrian*. 18.

but the Armenian edition does not contain it.

^a This rests upon a passage in the *Chronicon* of Eusebius;

A. D. 129. certainly did not adhere in matters of religion to the laws and customs of Rome.

The Jews in the mean time were suffering calamities, which exceeded even those that had accompanied the destruction of their city by Titus. Chronologists have been divided as to the exact date of the Jewish war, which happened at the end of the reign of Hadrian: and it is sufficient for our present purpose, if we approach to accuracy. I have stated, that in the year 119 the emperor visited Jerusalem, and changed the character of it in many respects to that of a Grecian or Roman town. The Jews, no doubt, felt the profanation deeply and bitterly: but for the present they were obliged to suppress their feelings. The emperor again visited Jerusalem more than once during his travels, and there is reason to think that on each occasion he provoked the inhabitants still more by the buildings which he erected. It was probably before the breaking out of the war, that he engaged the services of Aquila, who is better known as a translator of the Scriptures, and who appears also to have had a knowledge of architecture^b. He was a native of Pontus, and is said to have gone over to the Jewish religion, after having for a time professed Christianity. This part of his history however is open to doubt; and I should hardly have mentioned him at all, if he had not distinguished himself by a translation of the Scriptures into Greek, which was perhaps the second attempt of the kind, that which is called the Septuagint being the first. According to Jerom^c he made two

^b Epiphan. *de Mensuris*, 14. vol. II. p. 170.

^c In Jerem. V. 22. (vol. IV. p. 879.) ib. VIII. 17. (p. 903.)

translations, the last of which was the most faithful : and if it is true that he was employed by Hadrian in his new buildings at Jerusalem, we can partly fix the date of his translation of the Scriptures. A. D.
129.

Some persons have placed the beginning of the Jewish war in the year 128, which is certainly too early, if it be meant that hostilities openly broke out in that year. The Jews may perhaps have shewn some symptoms of discontent at that time ; and we are told that they bore very impatiently the introduction of heathen customs into Jerusalem. They dared not however have recourse to arms, while the emperor was in their neighbourhood : and so long as his travels kept him in Syria or Egypt, they concealed their intentions : but they continued secretly to prepare themselves for war ; and as soon as the emperor had removed to a greater distance, the insurrection became general through the whole of Judæa. We are perhaps to place this event in the year 132. A. D.
132. The name of the Roman commander in Judæa at that time was Rufus, who appears to have been taken by surprise, and to have been not altogether equal to the situation which he filled. The Jews also found a leader, who was in every way an extraordinary character, and one who in former times and with a less powerful enemy might have established the independence of his country^d.

This man is known in history by the name of Bar-Cochebas, though it is probable that he had

See Montfaucon, *Prælim. in Hexapl. Orig.* c. 5. Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sel. cap.* I. 60.

^d For all the details of this war I would refer to J. J. Haakius, *de Excidio Judæorum ac Hiero-*

solymæ sub Ælio Hadriano. F. Münter, *Der Jüdische Krieg unter den Kaisern Trajan und Hadrian :* and J. a Lent, *Schediasma Historico-philologicum de Judæorum pseudo-Messiis.*

A. D. 132. another name, and that this was given him after he had risen into note. *Bar Cochab* signifies *the son of a star*, and the title was considered by many of his followers as acknowledging his pretensions to be the promised Messiah. He was thus able to rouse the religious, as well as the political feelings of his countrymen, and their vengeance was at first irresistible. Great numbers of the heathen inhabitants of Palestine, whether Greeks or Romans, were put to the sword: and we learn also the interesting circumstance, that the Christians were sufferers in the same scene of anarchy and cruelty. The fact cannot be doubted, since it is reported by Justin Martyr^e, who was himself obliged to fly the country on account of the persecution; and who states that Bar-Cochebas sentenced the Christians to horrid punishments, if they would not deny that Jesus was the Christ, and utter blasphemy. Eusebius adds, that he had recourse to these measures, because the Christians would not join him in marching against the Romans^f. These statements might lead us into an inquiry, whether the religious principles of the Christians had thus impressed upon them the duty of obedience to their rulers: and some persons may reproach them for being insensible to liberty, while their countrymen were striving so courageously to shake off the yoke. Perhaps we should not be justified in making either of these remarks upon the conduct of the Christians. The words of Justin Martyr, if properly considered, seem to explain very clearly the motives of Bar-Cochebas. Like other popular leaders, he was not influenced solely by mo-

^e Apol. I. 31. p. 62.

^f Chron. Orosius, VII. 12.

tives of patriotism. He had his own interest in view as well as the liberty of his country ; and those who joined his standard were required to acknowledge him as the expected Messiah. It was obviously impossible for the Christians to assent to this : and when Justin Martyr speaks of their being tortured if they would not deny that Jesus was the Christ, his words are equivalent to saying, that they were tortured because they would not acknowledge Bar-Cochebas as the Christ. It was easy for the impostor to persuade his excited countrymen, that disaffection to himself was treachery to the cause in which they were embarked : and the Christians were put to death, not because they favoured the Romans, but because they could not take arms against them without abandoning the first principles of their religion, and the foundation of all their hopes. It is however highly probable, that the Christians did not look for deliverance from Rome with the same eagerness as their unbelieving countrymen. Religious feelings conspired with the love of liberty to make the latter impatient under their yoke. They looked for a deliverer who had been promised by God himself, and the time of his coming was believed to be drawing near. The Christians, on the other hand, had no such expectation. They knew that their Redeemer was already come ; and instead of longing for the time when Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, they saw in its destruction the completion of prophecy, and they had acquiesced in admitting the Gentiles to a participation in all their privileges. These feelings, together with the recollection of what they had suffered from the unbelieving Jews, may have made the Christians of Palestine unwilling to take arms

A. D.
132-135.

A. D. 132-135. against the Romans: and we shall see reasons for thinking that the Romans learnt in the course of this war to make a distinction between the Christians and the Jews.

The war continued for nearly four years. Rufus, who commanded the Roman forces, when it first broke out, was superseded by Julius Severus, who had acquired great military renown in Britain, and was now called from that country by the emperor to quell the formidable insurrection in Palestine. The new commander executed his commission, but it was by a war almost of extermination, and which lasted through several campaigns. Jerusalem was taken, but the Jews had not made their ancient capital the chief military position. Another city, whose name is scarcely mentioned in their former history, had been so strongly fortified, that it stood a siege of three years and an half. This was Bitthera, which lay between Jerusalem and the sea: and when it surrendered to the forces of Severus in the year 135, the war might be considered as concluded. It is stated that 580,000 Jews perished during its continuance: and the survivors were treated with a severity which they had not hitherto experienced from any of their conquerors. Bar-Cochebas perished in the siege of Bitthera. Many of his deluded followers were sold as slaves: and no Jew was allowed henceforward to pay even a passing visit to Jerusalem. On one day only in the year was it lawful for them to approach their unhappy city. This was the day of its being taken by Titus^g. On the anniversary of that event the Jews might take a view of the walls for the space of one hour, but they might do no more,

^g The tenth of August.

unless they purchased the indulgence for a settled sum; and the pains which Hadrian had taken to give to it the character of a Roman town, would have made a closer inspection of it still more painful. He is said to have built a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the spot which had been occupied by the Jewish temple. A statue of Jupiter was placed over the sepulchre of our Saviour, and another of Venus on mount Calvary. The worship of Adonis was established at Bethlehem^h; and it was now, that the name of Jerusalem gave way to that of *Ælia Capitolina*ⁱ, in honour of the emperor, who bore the name of *Ælius*.

A. D.
135.

If we may credit this account of the pains which were taken by Hadrian to establish the heathen worship, it is plain that he intended to insult the Christians as well as the Jews^k. It is not unlikely that he did so: but it is also certain, that the prohibition of settling in his new city of *Ælia* did not extend to the Christians as well as to the Jews. Eusebius informs us, that up to this time the bishops of the church at Jerusalem had all of them been Jews. He mentions fifteen, the last of whom was Judas: and he adds, that the church at *Ælia* being composed entirely of Gentiles, they had also a Gentile bishop, whose name was Marcus^l. If this account is to be followed strictly to the letter, we must believe, that all the Jewish Christians left the city; but it is not impossible that some of them may have been permitted to stay. It is at least certain that

^h Hieron. *Epist.* LVIII. 3. p. 319. Sulp. Sever. *H. E.* II.

ⁱ For the history of this new city v. Deylingius. *Observ. Sacr.* vol. V. p. 437.

^k Orsi doubts whether Hadrian acted thus, *Istor. Eccl.* vol. II. p. 77.

^l *H. E.* IV. 5, 6.

A. D.
135.

the Romans no longer confounded all Christians with Jews. Some Christians were undoubtedly resident in the city, or we should not have heard of Marcus being their bishop : and those, who were Jews only by descent, but had given up their adherence to the law of Moses, may perhaps have shared with their Gentile brethren the permission of staying within the walls^m.

It has been said by some writers, that the Christians, who fled to Pella when Jerusalem was besieged by Titus, did not return till the time of which we are now speakingⁿ. Such a notion seems utterly untenable. It is demonstrable that there was a church at Jerusalem at the beginning of the second century, and we know the succession of its bishops to the time of the second taking of the city. Symeon, who succeeded James the Just, was undoubtedly bishop of Jerusalem before and after the taking of the city by Titus, and it is impossible to suppose that he did not bring back with him part of his former flock. It is also nearly certain, that those who fled to Pella were all of them Jews ; and it is highly improbable that they went to Jerusalem at a time when their countrymen were prohibited from setting foot there, and when it is expressly said by Eusebius, that the church was composed of Gentiles. The name of one writer is recorded, who lived at Pella about this period, and is supposed to have been a Christian. This was Aristo, surnamed from his city Pellæus : and he is quoted by Eusebius, as

^m There is a strong proof that the church at Jerusalem was henceforth composed of Gentiles, since we find it agreeing with the western Christians

as to the time of observing the Paschal festival.

ⁿ See Scaliger, *ad Chron. Hieronym.* p. 211. Le Clerc, *Hist. Eccl.* ad an. 135.

mentioning some particulars of the present war. A. D.
135.
 He also wrote an account of a discussion between two persons named Jason and Papiscus, the latter of whom was an Alexandrian, and a convert to the Gospel°. This Aristo may perhaps be the same, who is said in the Alexandrian chronicle to have presented an apology to the emperor, together with another Christian named Apelles. The event is placed in the year 134, which was the last year but one of the present war: and though we know nothing of Apelles, and the presentation of this apology is not confirmed by any older document, there is nothing improbable in supposing some Christians to have addressed the emperor on the subject of their sufferings in Palestine.

I have conjectured, that the first destruction of the city by Titus was the cause of many Jews laying aside their peculiar customs, and devoting themselves more exclusively to the Gospel. Up to that time they had in a manner united the two religions: but the Judaizing Christians now became much fewer; and we have seen that the name of Nazarene was given to those who still adhered to the Mosaic ceremonies. The Nazarenes continued for the most part in the neighbourhood of Pella, though it is probable that the church at Jerusalem contained many persons, who in some points Judaized^p. When the new church, as it may be termed, was formed in Ælia, it may be supposed that these Judaizing Christians entirely disappeared: and this

° Maxim. Schol. in *Dionys. de Mystica Theologia*, c. 1. Grig. c. *Cels.* IV. 52. p. 544. Lam: *de Erudit. Apostol.* p. 156.

the Jewish Christians, “tum
 “pene omnes Christum Deum
 “sub legis observatione crede-
 “bant.” *H. E.* II.

^p Sulpitius Severus says of

A. D. 135. perhaps was the meaning of the writers who were followed by Eusebius, when he says that the church at Ælia was composed of Gentiles. There was henceforward no engrafting of Jewish ceremonies upon the simplicity of the Gospel. The persons who continued to do this in other places, were still looked upon as brethren: but their disappearance from the church at Jerusalem would naturally cause a great diminution of their numbers. The Nazarenes were almost confined to their original settlement at Pella: and being perhaps treated with contempt by the majority, they may have adopted some opinions from the Ebionites, who, like themselves, were descended from those Jews who had fled from Jerusalem during the siege. The view here taken will perhaps account for the Nazarenes not being named by any writer of the three first centuries^q; and for writers of the fourth century confounding them occasionally with the Ebionites.

We need not enter into the inquiry, whether Hadrian was at Rome or in the East at the termination of the Jewish war. He appears to have been at Rome in the year 135^r, and to have continued there during the few remaining years of his reign. Baronius speaks of some people of rank being put to death soon after his return, on account of their being Christians; and the celebration of the Vicennalia, or twentieth anniversary of his reign, which was held in the year 136, may have given occasion for cruelties of that kind. The same year was also distinguished by the adoption of Verus,

A. D.
136.

^q They are named for the first time by Epiphanius, *Har.* note 84.
^r See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. XXIX. See Bampton Lectures, 137.

who died in the year following; and the games, which were exhibited in honour of this event^s, were likely to give rise to a persecution of the Christians.

A. D.
137.

We cannot however depend upon the details, which are found in the Martyrologies. Hadrian must often have had the Christians brought under his notice during his travels; and it is not improbable that he had made himself acquainted with some peculiarities of their religion. We have seen that he had Apologies presented to him in Greece, and his letter to the proconsul of Asia would operate in favour of the Christians. It was with reference to this letter that Justin Martyr quoted Hadrian as having been favourable to the Christians^t: and it is undoubtedly incorrect, as some writers have done^u, to speak of this emperor as the fourth persecutor of the Christians. Still however it cannot be denied, that his reign was marked by great hostility to the Gospel, though he may not himself have directed any systematic opposition, and though, in spite of the priests and other interested persons, the new religion was daily gaining ground. An anecdote is told by a later writer, which, if it could be depended upon, would shew that Hadrian, at the end of his reign, was inclined to embrace Christianity. He is said by Lampridius^x to have intended to give to Jesus Christ a place among the Gods, and for this purpose to have ordered temples to be erected in several cities without any statues: but the same author adds, that he was deterred from his design

^s Spartian. *Hadrian*. c. 23. against the Christians. *Apol.* 5.

^t *Apol.* I. 68. p. 84.

^x *Alexand. Sever.* c. 43.

^u *Sulp. Sever. H. E.* II. Xiphilinus speaks of Hadrian
Tertullian says expressly, that
Hadrian published no edict
honouring the Christians, LXX.
3. p. 1173.

A. D. 137. by persons who told him, that all the world would thus become Christian, and the other temples would be deserted. It is perhaps fatal to this story, that it is not recorded by any earlier writer; and the fact seems to be, that Hadrian, not long before his death, had ordered several temples to be erected to himself, but did not live to have them dedicated^y. Many of them therefore continued unfinished, without any statue or any particular name: and in later times the story was invented, that Hadrian had intended them in honour of Jesus Christ. The notion of Hadrian having become favourable to Christianity, is made more improbable by what is said of him by another writer^z, that he paid the most anxious attention to the religious customs of Rome, and had a contempt for those of other countries.

A. D. 138. The death of the emperor took place in the year 138, not long after he had adopted Antoninus as his son and successor, who received the surname of Pius. The twenty years of Hadrian's reign were marked, as I have already observed, by the rapid spread of Christianity. It was now professed openly, in the most civilized portions of the empire, and we shall see presently that it must have been carried before this period into districts which were comparatively barbarous. Learned men and philosophers undertook to defend it by argument; and the reign of Hadrian may be mentioned as the first in which the works of Christian writers made their appearance. I have mentioned the Apologies of Quadratus and Aristides, which are known to

^y Such is the opinion of Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 136. The statement of Lampridius is de- fended by Huetius, *Demonst. Evang.* prop. III. 23.
^z Spartian, c. 22.

have been published, though they are now unfortunately lost. I have also alluded to the works of Agrippa Castor, which he wrote against the tenets of Basilides; and according to Eusebius he was by no means the only author who engaged in this controversy, though we cannot say for certain that any of them wrote in the time of Hadrian. The works, which they undertook to confute, whether written by Basilides or other maintainers of Gnosticism, would be another means of exciting attention to the Christian doctrines. The Gnostics are known to have been authors at an early period; perhaps at the beginning of the second century: we shall soon find them inundating the world with their irrational speculations; and whoever had patience to study their different systems, would be constrained to make some inquiry concerning the character and doctrines of Jesus Christ. The notoriety of the Gospel, and the inroad which it was making upon heathenism, are also proved by the pains which were taken to confute it. One of the most elaborate treatises, which was ever written against the Gospel, was composed by Celsus, in the reign of Hadrian^a. The work itself has long since perished, and only a few fragments of it are preserved by Origen, who published his celebrated reply to it in the middle of the third century. He speaks of Celsus as an Epicurean^b, though modern writers have shewn it to be more probable, that he ought to be classed among the later Platonists^c. His work, which he had the

A. D.
138.

^a Origen, *c. Cels.* I. 8. p. 327. Good reasons have been advanced for thinking that he lived later. Dodwell, *Diss. ad*

Iren. I. 18. p. 32.

^b 1. c.

^c Wesseling, *Probabil.* c. 23. p. 187. Neander, *Allgemeine*

A. D. 138. arrogance to call *The Word of Truth*^d, was directed against the Jews as well as against the Christians: and though the passages which are quoted by Origen might lead us to think slightly of his candour and his powers of reasoning, it is plain that he would not have thought Christianity worthy of his attacks, if he had not observed it to be spreading widely in the world. Celsus in fact undertook to effect by his pen, what magistrates and emperors had failed to do by torture and the sword. He fancied that the new religion could be overthrown by sarcasm and invective: but he little thought that his own philosophy was then hastening to its decay; and that the only memory of himself and his writings would be preserved in the pages of the Christians who confuted him.

Geschichte, part I. p. 254-9. German translation of Origen. Mosheim, in the preface to his ^b Λόγος ἀληθείας.

LECTURE XVII.

TITUS ANTONINUS, who was afterwards sur-
named Pius, was fifty-three years of age when he
succeeded to the empire upon the death of Hadrian.
His character, as drawn by an ancient writer^a,
was greatly tinged with superstition, and he is
represented as a second Numa. If he was sincerely
attached to the religion of his country, he could
hardly fail to be hostile to the Christians; and the
many years which he had passed in military service,
or in filling important stations, must have made
him acquainted with the fact, that Christianity was
widely spread. If we could be certain that he was
the Antoninus spoken of by Tertullian^b, we should
know that he had come in contact with the Chris-
tians many years before. That writer speaks of an
Arrius Antoninus, who persecuted them with great
severity in Asia; and when all the Christians in
the place came to him in a body offering themselves
to be put to death, he is reported to have said to
them contemptuously, “Miserable men! if you wish
“to die, are there no precipices or halters?” The
words would hardly deserve to be recorded, if Baro-
nius^c had not supposed them to have been spoken

A. D.
138.

^a Jul. Capitolinus, 13.

^b Ad Scap. c. ult.

^c He is followed by Gibbon
(c. XVI.) and Le Clerc, *Hist.*
Eccl. ad an. 121. Arrius Anto-

ninus was proconsul of Asia in
that year. He is opposed by
Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II.
part. 2. p. 435.

A. D.
138.

by Antoninus, who was afterwards emperor, and he is known to have been proconsul of Asia in the year 121. There is however very little ground for such a supposition: and the story may be referred with greater probability to Arrius Antoninus, who was proconsul of Asia in the reign of Commodus.

We have therefore nothing but the general character of Antoninus Pius, and the notoriety of the Christian doctrines, which could enable us to judge of his religious feelings when he succeeded to the empire. It might perhaps be inferred from his conduct to the Jews, that he was rather more inclined to toleration than some who had preceded him. At the close of the last Jewish war the Jews were forbidden by two edicts of Hadrian to practise circumcision, not only upon proselytes, but upon their own children. Antoninus so far relaxed this severity, that he permitted circumcision among the Jews themselves, though it was still forbidden for proselytes^d: and it would perhaps be difficult to argue from this case, whether he would be more or less likely than Hadrian to allow any indulgence to the Christians.

The chronology of the bishops of Rome at this period is as usual involved in perplexity: and there might be no need for inquiry into such minute points, if Eusebius did not expressly say in his history^e, that Telesphorus, bishop of Rome, died in the first year of Antoninus Pius. It rests upon the unquestionable authority of Irenæus^f, that Telesphorus suffered martyrdom: and it is

^d Modestinus, *Pandect.* c. he places this event four years earlier.
II. ad leg. Corn. de Sicar.

^e IV. 10. In his Chronicon ^f III. 3, 3.

worthy of remark, that Irenæus does not say this of any preceding bishop of Rome, though he mentions them all in regular order. If Telesphorus was martyred in the first year of Antoninus Pius, it is probable that other Christians of less note shared the same fate; and we may again conjecture, that the games and other solemnities, which ushered in a new reign, gave a license to those persons, who cherished hostility to the Gospel.

A. D.
138.

There is no doubt that Telesphorus, in whatever year he died, was succeeded by Hyginus: and the accession of the latter is a point of some importance in chronology, as connected with a memorable event in the history of Gnosticism. It is stated, upon authority which can hardly be disputed^g, that Valentinus and Cerdon, two celebrated leaders of the Gnostics, came to Rome while Hyginus was bishop: and, since he held the see only four years, the date of the arrival of these persons might seem to be almost settled. Unfortunately, however, the appointment of Hyginus to the bishopric has given rise to very different opinions: and while Eusebius, as I have stated, placed it in the year 138 or 139, modern chronologists have fixed it as early as 122^h, or even 118ⁱ. If either of these latter dates could be established, Valentinus had been spreading his doctrines in Rome nearly twenty years before the period at which we are now arrived. With respect to the succession of the bishops of Rome in the first century, I have expressed myself not unfavourable to the shorter scheme of chronology:

^g Iren. I. 27. 1. p. 105. III. *Success.* c. 12, 13.

4. 3. p. 178. Eus. *Chron.*

ⁱ Baratier, *de Success. Pontif.*

^h Pearson, *de Rom. Pontif.* *Rom.* p. 93.

A. D. in the case now before us it is perhaps safer not to
138-142. depart from the dates which are given by Eusebius.
 If we follow Tertullian, who wrote in the second century, and was perhaps born in the reign of Antoninus Pius, there can be no doubt that Eusebius was correct: for he states that Valentinus came to Rome in the reign of Antoninus Pius^k: so that part of the four years, during which Hyginus was bishop of Rome, must fall within some period of that emperor's reign. Thus far then Eusebius and Tertullian exactly agree; and both of them may be quoted as saying that Valentinus and Cerdon came to Rome some time between the years 138 and 142.

The names of these heretics are now so entirely forgotten, and the philosophical system which they espoused appears so irrational to modern ideas, that it may be difficult to understand the conspicuous place which they hold in ecclesiastical history. And yet nothing is more certain, than that the different systems of Gnosticism were as widely spread, and caused as much discussion in the second century, as any of those branches of philosophy which were taught in the Grecian schools. Valentinus is said to have been an Egyptian^l; by which we are perhaps to understand that he studied at Alexandria: and it is plain from many of his opinions, that he was partial to the philosophy of Plato. According to some accounts he was once a true Christian, and taught the doctrines of the Gospel in Egypt and at Rome^m. He must even have taken orders, and been of some note in his profession, if it is true that

^k De Præscript. 30. ^l Epiphani. *Hær.* XXXI. 2. ^m Ibid. 7.

he aspired to a bishopric, and fell into heresy through disappointment at the election of a rivalⁿ. A. D. 138-142.
 The scene of his apostasy is laid in Cyprus^o: and if all these accounts are to be received and put together in a connected history, it seems most probable, that Cyprus was the place of his birth, or at least of his residence, and that he came to Rome more than once: but when Irenæus spoke of his being there in the time of Hyginus, he seems to have spoken of him as an heretic, and to have intended to mark the time when he first introduced his philosophy into Rome. There is no doubt that he had adopted Gnosticism, the seeds of which may have been implanted in his mind while he studied at Alexandria: and the name of Prodicus^p is mentioned as of a person whose ideas he followed, though he expanded and altered them according to his own fancy. The tenets of Prodicus have been connected with those of Carpocrates, who probably began his heresy in the first century: but his son Epiphanes appears to have lived in the reign of Hadrian^q, from whom Valentinus may have imbibed some of his notions; and though some allowance must be made for exaggeration and invective, there is too good reason to believe that the Gnostics of this school defended upon principle, and exhibited in practice, the greatest licentiousness of morals. The character of Valentinus is not free from this stain: but he owed his celebrity to the new form which he gave to many of the Gnostic notions, and

ⁿ Tertull. *cont. Val.* 4.

^o Epiphani. l. c.

^p Tertull. *cont. Prax.* 3. p. 481.
Scorpiac. c. ult.

^q Theodoret, *Hæc. Fab.* l. 5.

Bampton Lectures, note 75.

A. D. 138–142. to the zeal with which he propagated them both orally and by his writings^r.

His former attachment to the Gospel was conspicuous through all his extravagant corruptions of it. It was even said of him, that he had received instructions from Theodas, who had been a disciple of St. Paul^s: and his supporters, as well as those of Marcion, pretended to follow the doctrines of Matthias^t. Jesus Christ held the prominent place in his theological system; though he adopted, with new modifications of his own, the absurd opinion of the earlier Gnostics, that Jesus did not take any thing corporeal from his mother, but that the bodily appearance which he bore descended with him from heaven. The point which he seems principally to have studied, was the number and arrangement of the Æons, or Emanations, which were believed by all the Gnostics to have proceeded from the first Cause. Valentinus maintained that there were thirty of these Æons, fifteen male and fifteen female: and Jesus (whom he called Christ, and the Saviour, and the Word) was produced in a mysterious manner by the united agency of all these Æons. It is not necessary to pursue this rhapsody any further. If such a man attracted followers, we need not wonder that those who presided over the church exerted all their powers to arrest the evil. The

^r See Buddæus *de Hæresi Valentiniana*. Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const.* II. c. 53. Fragments of his writings are collected by Grabe, *Spicileg. Sæc. II.* p. 50: and among the papers of Woide, which were purchased by the delegates of

the Oxford press, there is a later translation from a Coptic work, which has been thought to be part of the *Πιστὴ Σοφία* written by Valentinus.

^s Clem. Alex. *Strom.* VII. p. 898.

^t *Ib.* p. 900.

weaker brethren were in danger of being misled; and the heathen were prejudiced against the Gospel by meeting with it in that corrupted form which it assumed in the school of Valentinus. We shall trace the mischievous effects of his opinions through great part of the present century. Tertullian has preserved the names of many of his followers^u, each of whom seemed to vie with their master in the extravagance of their notions: and though we have lost the works of many writers who exposed these absurdities, we have a special treatise written against them by Tertullian, and the great work of Irenæus will enable us to form some judgment of the Valentinian Gnostics. A. D. 138-142.

The other person who is said to have come to Rome in the time of Hyginus, that is, between the years 138 and 142, was Cerdon, whose fame has been eclipsed by that of Marcion, who came to Rome some years later, and adopted that form of Gnosticism which Cerdon had already brought into notice. It is generally stated that Marcion was a disciple of Cerdon: and such may have been the fact: but he may have adopted his opinions, without having been personally taught by him: and it is certain that Marcion had obtained some celebrity before the time which is assigned for Cerdon's going to Rome. The country in which we first hear of Cerdon propagating his opinions, was Syria^x: and it is not improbable that he was a follower of Saturninus, whom I have already mentioned as a successor of Simon Magus, and the leader of a Gnostic sect in Antioch. Though his connexion with the Gnostics

^u Cont. Valentin. 4. *De Præscript.* 50.

^x Epiphani. *Hær.* XLI. 1. p. 299.

A. D. 138-142. might thus be easily traced, and nearly all his opinions may be deduced from that fanciful school, it has been the custom with most writers to place Cerdon at the head of a distinct party, or rather to seek for the origin of his tenets in the theology of the Persian Magi. He is said to have been the first Gnostic who held the doctrine of two Principles, or two Gods, the one good, and the other evil : and there can be no doubt that such a notion had been entertained in the East from a very early period. We have seen however that Basilides, who studied in Alexandria, is said to have held the doctrine of two Principles ; and it is not easy to perceive the difference between their two systems. With respect to Cerdon, I would observe, as I did of Basilides, that his speculations seem to have turned principally upon the origin of evil. All the Gnostic philosophers were more or less employed in solving this interminable problem : they all agreed in separating the supreme God from the Creator of the world : and while Valentinus and his school interposed several orders of Beings between the first Cause and the Demiurgus, Cerdon seems rather to have ascribed Creation to a malevolent Being who was coeternal with God. Valentinus believed Christ to have been formed by the united energy of the other Æons : Cerdon considered him as the son of the good or superior God. Both of them taught that Christ was sent by God to repair the evil which the Demiurgus, or the Evil Principle, had caused by creating the world.

Cerdon appears, like Valentinus, to have been at one time a real Christian. Irenæus speaks of his confessing his errors more than once, and finally

withdrawing from the church in consequence of a rebuke which he received for his doctrines^y. It ^{A. D. 138-142.} has been assumed that these recantations took place at Rome: but I should rather refer them to an earlier period of his life, and conclude that he did not come to Rome till he had matured his heresy, and been distinguished for some time as a Gnostic teacher. A writer, whose date and authority are extremely doubtful^z, speaks of a council being convened by Apollonius, bishop of Corinth, which condemned the tenets of Cerdon. He might therefore be supposed to have travelled from Syria into Greece, on his way to Italy: but there is reason to think, that the custom of holding councils did not begin so early; and the story is perhaps deserving of little credit. The church of Rome had thus the misfortune of seeing her members exposed to great danger from this false philosophy. Hitherto we have seen no heresy take its rise in Rome, nor in any of the western churches: a compliment which was paid to Rome by a writer of the fourth century^a, and which she continued to merit even beyond that period. The warmer imaginations of the eastern Christians were more readily worked upon by the subtle disputes which were carried on in the schools of Alexandria and Antioch. These cities, and particularly the former, were the hot-beds from which nearly all the mischief arose, which under the name of philosophy inundated the church in the second century: and though Valentinus, Cerdon, and Marcion, took the same course, and carried their doctrines to Rome, there was perhaps

^y III. 4. 3. p. 179.

^z Prædestinatus, 23.

^a Rufinus, *In Symbol. Apost.*

A.D. 133-142. no other reason for their going thither, than that Rome was the capital of the world, and they were ambitious of exhibiting their powers in the largest and most celebrated field.

We do not read of Valentinus or Cerdon coming personally in contact with Hyginus, and perhaps some time elapsed before their doctrines were embraced by any members of the Roman church. Hyginus only held the see four years, and died in 141 or 142. Baronius speaks of him as suffering martyrdom: but as usual he reports this upon very insufficient evidence. The next bishop was Pius: and there is reason to think, that the apocryphal book, entitled *the Shepherd*, was composed by a brother of Pius, named Hermas^b. The work has been ascribed to a much earlier writer, the Hermas who is mentioned by St. Paul at the end of his Epistle to the Romans^c: but few persons would now support such an opinion, or believe that the book was written by any one who enjoyed the friendship of St. Paul. It is filled with many sentiments of piety and devotion; but there is also much of puerility and mysticism, which seems more suited to the middle of the second, than to the apostolic age. It was certainly received in very early times with a respect not far distant from that which was paid to the canonical scriptures. It is quoted by Irenæus, and must therefore have been in circulation some time before his day: and the notion of its being written by Hermas, the brother of Pius,

^b See the book *de Pontificibus Romanis*, quoted by Baronius, ad an. 159. num. IV. Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const.* Cent. I. §. 54. Dallæus *de Libr. Dionys. et Ignat.* p. 250. ^c XVI. 14.

would allow us to place it in the former half of the second century. A. D.
142.

It seems to have been soon after the death of Hyginus, that another distinguished heretic came to Rome. This was Marcion, whose name I have already mentioned, as a follower of Cerdon: and though he is said to have come to Rome at this time^d, and to have reached the height of his fame some years later, when Anicetus was bishop^e, we have positive evidence that he was known as a Gnostic teacher at an earlier period. He seems to have preceded Celsus^f, who wrote in the reign of Hadrian, and who chose to confound him with the Christians. Clement of Alexandria also seems to place him in the reign of Hadrian^g: and though the Fathers have been suspected of unfairness, or even of wilful invention, when speaking of this heretic, I cannot omit the following sketch which they have given of his history.

He was a native of Sinope in Pontus, and Tertullian applies to him a term which might signify that he was a sailor^h. This would not prepare us for what is said by the same writer, that he studied the philosophy of the Stoicsⁱ: but he perhaps meant, that the peculiar notions adopted afterwards by Marcion have a resemblance to those of the Stoical school. There might be more discussion as to the accuracy of another statement, which says that his father was a Christian bishop, and that Marcion's early years were spent in a kind of

^d Epiphani. *Hær.* XLII. 1. 53. II. 3.

p. 302.

^e Iren. III. 4. 3. p. 179.

^f "Invaluit sub Aniceto."

^g Origen. *cont. Celsum*, VI.

^g Strom. VII. 17. p. 898.

^h "Nauclerus." *de Præscript.*

30.

ⁱ Ib.

A. D. 142. monastic or ascetic retirement^k. The sequel of his history is very disgraceful. Having seduced a young woman, he was expelled from the church by his own father, whose principles are represented as particularly strict, and Marcion tried in vain to soften him into forgiveness. Being taunted in his own country for the disgrace which he had incurred, he thought fit to withdraw, and, according to Epiphanius, he went immediately to Rome. It seems however almost certain, that his lapse into heresy took place before his journey to that capital. I have mentioned that he was known as an heretic in the reign of Hadrian: and one writer says expressly, that he began to propagate his errors in Asia, and was there reprov'd by persons who had been disciples of St. John^l. Nothing was more likely than that he should visit Asia Minor; and many, who remembered the aged Apostle during his residence at Ephesus, may have lived to converse with Marcion at the end of the reign of Hadrian. Polycarp, the celebrated bishop of Smyrna, did not die till several years after; and we shall find him coming in contact with Marcion in a visit which he paid to Rome; which makes it not improbable, that Polycarp was one of the disciples of St. John who rebuked him at the commencement of his heresy in Asia Minor. If Marcion passed any length of time in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, we can easily account for his joining the ranks of the Gnostics: and the notion of his having joined them before he went to Rome is confirmed by an anecdote preserved by Jerom^m, who speaks of a female ar-

^k Tertull. *de Præscript.* 51.
Epiphani. l. c.

^m Epist. CXXXIII. Ad Ctesiph. p. 1025.

^l Philastrius, 45.

riving before him in that city, who was sent to pre-
 pare the way for his reception. The custom of em-
 ploying female teachers, or prophetesses, as they are
 sometimes called, was common with the Gnostics.
 Marcellina perverted many Christians of Rome while
 Anicetus was bishopⁿ. Apelles, a disciple of Mar-
 cion, made great use of Philumene, who pretended
 to be inspired^o: the heresy of Montanus, though
 different from that of the Gnostics, derived great ce-
 lebrity from its prophetesses; and the superstitions
 of the ancient heathen, as well as of almost every
 nation, whose religious rites have been recorded,
 may explain why Marcion had recourse to a similar
 expedient.

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 142.

It may be supposed that he was not favourably
 received by the Christians of Rome. They may
 have heard of the crime which expelled him from
 his native country, as well as of the heretical opin-
 ions which he had been spreading in Asia Minor;
 and on either of these accounts they would have re-
 fused to admit him to their communion, till he had
 made the proper submission. It is stated, that he
 not only pressed to be admitted into the congrega-
 tion, but that he was even a candidate for some high
 station in the church; and when both these petitions
 were refused, he openly threw himself into the party
 of Cerdon, who was either at this time in Rome, or
 had left it not long before.

The account here given of the heresy of Marcion
 is taken principally from Epiphanius, whose state-
 ment contains many things which it is difficult to
 reconcile with themselves, and with the assertions of

ⁿ Iren. I. 25, 6. p. 104.

^o Tertull. *de Præscript.* 6, 30. Rhodon *apud Eus. H. E.* V. 13.

A. D.
142.

other writers. It is not necessary to examine critically the conflicting evidence: but it seems to be admitted as a settled point, that Marcion came to Rome soon after the death of Hyginus, probably about the year 141 or 142, and that soon after his arrival he adopted the heresy of Cerdon. I need not add much to the account which was given of the peculiar branch of Gnosticism which was embraced by Cerdon. Marcion became more celebrated than his master, and was accused like him of maintaining the doctrine of two principles. Sometimes indeed he has been charged with believing in three^p or even in four^q principles: but the difference arose from a want of precision in the use of the term *principle*^r. The foundation of Marcion's creed consisted in his not believing the supreme God to be the Creator of the world^s; but it is not certain that he would have spoken of the Creator, or Demiurgus, as a principle. He undoubtedly held Matter to be coeternal with God, and therefore he made it in every sense to be a principle: and while he believed the supreme God to be intrinsically good, he believed Matter to be intrinsically evil. It would perhaps be most correct to say that he held only two principles, God and Matter; but he sometimes spoke so abstractedly of evil, as to make it a third and independent principle. We know that his followers were divided upon this point in the reign of Commodus^t, and while Apelles

^p Athanas. *de Decret. Syn. Nic.* 26. vol. I. p. 231. *Orat. III. cont. Arian.* 15. p. 564. Epiphani. *Hær.* XLII. 3. p. 304. Cyrill. Hieros. *Catech.* XVI. 7.

^q Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* I. 24. p. 210. Timoth. Presb.

^r See Beausobre, *Hist. de Maniché.* IV. 6, 8. vol. II. p. 89.

^s See Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I. 26. p. 59. *ib.* 58. p. 78.

^t Eus. *H. E.* V. 13.

professed to hold only one principle, another party was attached to Syneros, who believed in three. It is probable that all these differences might have been resolved into a dispute about words: and nothing can shew more strongly the little success which the Gnostics met with in investigating the origin of evil.

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142.

It seems nearly certain, that Valentinus was in Rome at the same time with Marcion. Tertullian, who ought to have known, speaks of Valentinus as a disciple of Marcion^u, though we have seen that Valentinus arrived in Rome a few years sooner. They perhaps borrowed mutually from each other; and Marcion appears to have gone even farther than Valentinus in denying the incarnation of Jesus and the substantiality of his body. Both of them retained to the last an attachment to the Gospel. Marcion admitted some of the books of the New Testament, but with alterations and mutilations; and though he is said to have received the Gospel of St. Luke, it was more properly a composition of his own, formed upon the basis of that Evangelist.

The success, which these heretics met with in gaining followers, cannot be disputed, though it might seem incredible that such irrational philosophy could ever have been popular. The writings of the Fathers make it too evident that many Christians were seduced to exchange their faith in Christ for this spurious and garbled Christianity. Nor was this all. The Gnostics took their place among the philosophers of the day, and delivered their opinions openly and fearlessly. Their outward conformity with the heathen superstitions kept them

^u De Carne Christi, I. p. 307.

A. D. safe from persecution ; and thus the name of Christ
142. became more widely spread, than if it had been confined to the preaching of genuine Christians. Whatever was offensive in the principles or practice of the Gnostics, was believed to be a part of the Christian creed. The heathen either could not or would not perceive the difference between them : and Christianity, instead of being looked upon as a mild and harmless religion, was identified with every thing that was unnatural and revolting. The consequence, as might be expected, was fatal to the Christians : and there is little doubt, that the arrival of Valentinus and Marcion in Rome was the cause of a renewal of all their sufferings.

That the Christians were exposed to severe trials about this period, is proved by a most interesting document which is still extant, the first Apology or Defence presented by Justin Martyr to the emperor Antoninus Pius. The date of its presentation has led to much discussion ; and while some would place it as early as 139, others would make it as late as 148 or 150. Justin's own words might seem to support the latter opinion, since he speaks of 150 years having elapsed since the birth of Christ : though it might be said in answer to this, that he spoke in round numbers, and that his expression is not to be taken too literally. We have perhaps a stronger argument in the fact of Lucius Verus, who was afterwards emperor, being mentioned in terms of panegyric : and since he was born in 131, he would have received this compliment at the age of eight years, if Justin's Apology was written in 139. This inclines me to agree with those writers who have adopted the later date ; and we are perhaps not far

from the truth, if we suppose Justin to have addressed the emperor about the year 148^x. A. D.
148.

Justin Martyr was born of Gentile parents at Flavia Neapolis, the ancient Sichem, in Samaria; and some have placed his birth as early as the year 89, though it seems most probable, that he was not born till after the beginning of the second century^y. We know, from his own words, that he attached himself in succession to various schools of philosophy, but found satisfaction in none of them. The Platonic was the last, and he saw in it much which delighted him; but he was at length converted to Christianity by seeing the constancy with which the Christians endured torture. It is perhaps worthy of remark, as illustrating the manners of the times, that he continued, even after he was a Christian, to wear the mantle or peculiar dress which philosophers were in the habit of wearing^z: and it is not necessary to suppose, that his change of religion caused him to give up altogether his former literary pursuits. His conversion has been placed in the year 133^a; and if the conjecture is right, he may himself have been a sufferer in the cruelties practised upon the Christians by Bar-Cochebas. We have his own authority for saying, that he left his native country on account of the war

^x Such was the opinion of Baronius, Valesius, Papebrochius, the Benedictine editor, Tillemont, Grabe. See Orsi, *Diss. Hist. de cap. crim. abs.* §. I. c. 4.

^y Tillemont places it in 103. *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 580.

^z Dial. cum Tryph. *init.* Ori-

gen states the same of Heraclas, afterwards bishop of Alexandria: (apud Eus. *H. E.* VI. 19.) and Jerom states it of Aristides the Athenian philosopher, (*Catal. Script.*) It is said also of Athenagoras by Philippus Sidetes, apud Dodwell. *Diss. Iren.* v. Tertull. *de Pallio.*

^a See Tillemont, *l. c.* p. 585.

A. D. 148. which was excited by that impostor ; and the revolt, as we have seen, was not finally quelled till the year 135. It is uncertain whether he went immediately to Rome ; we know of his being at one time in Alexandria^b : but he was certainly in Rome when he presented his Apology, and wherever he had passed his time, he had witnessed the success of Gnostic teachers, and the calumnies and cruelties which were directed against the Christians. His Apology is addressed to the emperor, his adopted sons M. Aurelius and L. Verus, the senate and people of Rome ; and contains an exposure of the follies of Paganism, as well as arguments in defence of Christianity. We learn from it also the curious fact, that the books of the Sibyls were forbidden to be read under pain of capital punishment, though Justin avows boldly that he continued to read them. He also appeals to them, and invites his enemies to study them, as if they were favourable to the Christian cause : and it is plain from his own writings, that he assigned to them an ancient date, and supposed them to contain inspired predictions of the times of the Messiah.

Justin is not the only one of the Fathers who entertained this belief : and though such a conclusion may lead us to impugn his critical powers, it does not prove him less sincere in his attachment to the Gospel, or weaken his other arguments in support of it. In the present day there is perhaps no person who does not conceive the Sibylline oracles to be forgeries : and yet in the age of Justin Martyr there was perhaps no person who did not believe them to be inspired. The verses of the Sibyls were known

^b Justin Mart. Cohort. 13. p. 17.

to the heathen from a remote antiquity: the Jews, as well as the Christians, appealed to them; and the prohibition of their perusal by an imperial decree is a sufficient proof of the effect which they were calculated to produce. If some of the oracles, which are quoted by the Fathers, could be proved to be genuine, the conclusion would seem irresistible, that the writers of them were inspired. They allude to the personal history of Christ, and the leading doctrines of his religion, with much greater plainness than the prophecies in the Jewish scriptures: Justin Martyr and several of the Fathers appeal to them as documents which no one could dispute: and yet no rational person can doubt, that they were written subsequently to the establishment of the Gospel^c.

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148.

It is certainly difficult to account for their genuineness being so generally believed in the time of Justin. He could not have forged them himself, nor could they have been of very recent invention, or the argument which he deduces from their notoriety would have been nothing. A remark, which was made in a former lecture^d concerning the origin of Gnosticism, will perhaps assist us in removing this difficulty. I observed that the Jews and Platonic philosophers in Alexandria were in the habit of disputing upon the antiquity of their respective systems. The Jews contended that Plato had borrowed from Moses: and the Platonists referred to writings which were older than Plato or Moses.

^c See Fabricius, *Bibl. Græc.* vol. I. p. 167. Blondell, *Des Sibylles célèbres* &c. Mosheim *de turbata per Platonicos Ecclesia*, §. 41. Marekius *de carm. Sibyll.* disput. XII. §. 11.

^d Lecture III. p. 76.

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148.

There is reason to think that both parties had recourse to forgeries in the course of these discussions. The Jews endeavoured to conciliate the heathen by such works as the book of Wisdom, which bears evident traces of the Platonic philosophy: and the Platonists produced the writings of Orpheus, Musæus, and the Sibyls, in which they shewed their acquaintance with the theology of the Jews. It is possible that some of the Jewish prophecies, when translated into Greek, may have found a place in these Alexandrian forgeries; and some of the verses, which are quoted by Justin, may really have been current among the heathen before the birth of Christ. There are others, however, which it is impossible not to suspect of a more recent origin^e: and these perhaps may be likewise traced to Alexandria as their source. Gnosticism, as we have seen, was a compound of Platonism, Judaism, and the Gospel: and while the system was being formed in the schools of Alexandria, the work of forgery was not likely to be forgotten^f. It was then, as I should conjecture, that so many passages concerning Christ were inserted into different copies of the Sibylline oracles: the works of Hermes Trismegistus^g, Zoroaster, Zostrianus and others, which lay claim to a remote antiquity, were perhaps composed at the same period; and if Justin Martyr met with them

^e There is a passage in l. V. vers. 47. which cannot have been written before the year 138. See *Le Sueur, Hist. de l'Eglise*, ad an. 144.

^f That works of this kind were forged by heretics, is said by Irenæus, l. 20. p. 91. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* l. 15. p. 357.

But Celsus, who was a contemporary of Justin, expressly accuses the Christians of interpolating the oracles, *apud Orig. c. Cels.* VII. 56.

^g See Casaub. *Exerc. in Baron.* l. 1. §. 18. p. 54. Beausobre, *Hist. de Manichéisme*, tom. II. p. 201.

several years after in Palestine or at Rome, we are not to be surprised if in an uncritical age he did not detect the forgery.

A. D.
148.

Having been led to say thus much concerning the writings of Justin Martyr, I ought perhaps to notice a charge, which has been brought against him in modern times, of having corrupted the Gospel from Platonism. It has been said, that he introduced the doctrine of the personality of the Logos, having met with it in the philosophy of Plato: and hence it is argued, that the Christians before the time of Justin did not believe Jesus Christ to be a divine person, or truly the Son of God, but merely an ordinary human being. A few words may prove the utter groundlessness of such a charge. It is built on the assumption, that the personality of the Logos is to be found in the writings of Plato: but though those writings contain many obscure passages concerning the Logos or Mind or Reason of God, it is demonstrable that Plato never imagined this Logos or Mind to be a person in the sense in which Christians believe the Son of God to be a person. The later Platonists endeavoured to twist their master's expressions to bear this meaning; but not till the Gospel had made great progress, and when they wished to prove, that the doctrines of Jesus Christ had been anticipated by Plato. In endeavouring to establish this point, they palpably perverted the tenets of their founder: and instead of it being true, that Justin Martyr corrupted Christianity from Platonism, it is well known that Platonism was corrupted, and wholly changed its character, in consequence of the Gospel. The charge, which is brought against Justin Martyr, is an acknowledgment that

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148.

he believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ ; a fact, which cannot be denied by any person who studies his writings : and though, in establishing this point, he quotes the authority of Plato, as if that philosopher had spoken of a divine person in the character of the Logos, it is plain, as I said before, that in using this argument he wrote as a Christian and not as a Platonist. The argument may be rejected as founded upon a mistake, but it proves that Justin had no design of making his religion bend to his philosophy. If he taught that the Logos was a divine person distinct from God, he found no such idea in the writings of Plato: he must have heard it in the schools which first made him acquainted with the doctrines of the Gospel ; and if he had wished to corrupt those doctrines by mixing them with Platonism, he would have taught that the Logos was not a person, but another expression for the Deity himself.

The opinions of Justin may be gathered from his second Apology, which I shall notice hereafter ; from an address to the Greeks, though the genuineness of this piece has been disputed ; from a fragment of a treatise concerning monarchy ; from another fragment of an epistle to Diognetus, which has been ascribed to other authors ; and particularly from the Dialogue or Disputation with Trypho, a Jew. The last is the greatest and most celebrated work of Justin ; and it is not necessary to discuss the time when the dialogue was held, which some have fixed as early as 140, and others as late as 155 or 158. It is possible after all, that it is a fictitious dialogue ; or, though we might approximate to its date from the internal evidence, it would not follow that the pub-

lication took place immediately. If the discussion really took place, we learn from it that Justin was once residing at Ephesus : and it is generally supposed, that he left Rome some time after the presentation of his first apology, and went to Asia Minor. Trypho speaks of himself as residing at Corinth, having been obliged to leave Judæa on account of the recent war. This was probably the revolt excited by Bar-Cochebas, which was likewise the cause of Justin leaving the country : and some persons have imagined, that Trypho was a celebrated Rabbi, who is mentioned in Jewish writings under the name of Tarpho ; but their identity must be considered a very doubtful point. Justin was also the author of several other works, which have not come down to us : and the history of Gnosticism would probably be much less obscure, if the work was extant, which he published against all heresies^h. We find him reckoned among the authors who wrote against Valentinus and Marcionⁱ ; and since he was contemporary with those heretics, and probably witnessed the success of their teaching in Rome, we should learn many interesting particulars, if that important work could be recovered.

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148.

^h Apol. I. 26. p. 60.

ⁱ Tertull. *adv. Valentin.* 5. Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* I. 25. p. 211.

LECTURE XVIII.

A. D.
148.

I HAVE mentioned the year 148 as the most probable date of Justin Martyr's first Apology, which he presented to the emperor Antoninus Pius. We should wish to know what was the effect of so decided and hazardous a measure: but there is perhaps no direct evidence upon the subject. A letter appears at the end of the Apology, and is likewise preserved by Eusebius, which this writer represents as an edict addressed by Antoninus Pius to the cities of Asia, and it is decidedly in favour of the Christians. There are, however, good reasons for assigning it to Marcus Aurelius, rather than to his predecessor, or at least for placing it several years later; and we must perhaps allow that we know nothing of the effect produced by Justin's Apology, nor have we authentic accounts of the conduct pursued by Antoninus toward the Christians at this period of his reign. Justin himself, at the end of his Apology, alluded to the letter which Hadrian had addressed to the proconsul of Asia^a: and he demanded as a right that the Christians should be brought before legal tribunals. We may hope that the emperor did not shew less regard for justice in this respect than his predecessor. One writer asserts, that he treated the Christians with kindness in consequence

^a See page 76.

of this Apology^b: and another goes so far as to say, that he gave no trouble to the Christians, but treated them with respect, and even added to the honour which Hadrian had shewed toward them^c. This expression is probably much too strong, as applied to either emperor: but there is positive evidence that Antoninus, at some period of his reign, wrote letters to different cities in favour of the Christians. The fact is preserved by Melito, bishop of Sardes, who himself presented an apology not many years later than that of Justin; and he speaks of Antoninus having written to the inhabitants of Athens, Thessalonica, and Larissa, as well as to the people of Greece generally, ordering them to abstain from molesting the Christians^d. It is possible that this may have been in consequence of the appeal made to him by Justin; and I have brought these statements together, not as thinking them all deserving of equal credit, but as collecting from them, that the sufferings of the Christians during this reign were not countenanced by the emperor himself.

The emperor, however, was not able to protect them from their enemies: and when the Gnostics were corrupting the Church from within, and the heathen attacking it from without, our wonder is increased, that the Gospel continued to make such a rapid progress. The middle of the second century may perhaps be mentioned as the time when the ravings of Gnosticism were most successful, and it cannot be doubted that many Christians were led to embrace that extravagant philosophy. The Alexandrian church can hardly have escaped the conta-

^b Orosius, *Hist.* VII. 14. ^c Xiphilinus, LXX. 3. p. 1173.

^d Apud Eus. *H. E.* IV. 26.

A. D. 148. gion, when so many of the Gnostic teachers imbibed their principles in that city: but we know little of the progress of Christianity in Alexandria, except that the persons who held the bishopric have had their names preserved by Eusebius. I have mentioned that Primus was succeeded by Justus in the year 120; and upon the death of Justus in 131 Eumenes was chosen. The list may be continued by the appointment of Marcus in 143, and of Celadion in 153. From Alexandria the Gnostic doctrines appear to have travelled first to Asia Minor: and if we could believe that councils were held as early as the middle of the second century, we might admit the story of Theodotus bishop of Pergamos convening the bishops of his neighbourhood, and condemning the doctrines of Colorbasus, who was one of the pupils of Valentinus^e. We find traces of these heretics also at Antioch in Syria, where there had been from the earliest times a numerous Christian congregation. Heros, who succeeded Ignatius in the bishopric, was martyred in 129, and was succeeded by Cornelius; and the latter was succeeded by another Heros in 141.

Gnosticism had now been propagated in Europe as well as in Asia. We have seen it brought to Rome about the year 140 by Valentinus and Cerdon, and soon after by Marcion; and the fame of these teachers appears to have eclipsed that of their predecessors. Irenæus speaks of Valentinus continuing till the time of Anicetus being bishop, and of Marcion's popularity being at its height during the same period. Anicetus succeeded Pius in 156^f; and the

^e Prædestinatus, 15.

^f Two letters are extant, which purport to have been written by Pius to Justus, bi-

twelve years, during which he held the see, were on many accounts remarkable. It was then that Marcellina, a female teacher of Gnosticism, came to Rome^g: and we may learn something of the progress of this sect, when we read that she was very successful in gaining proselytes. But one of the most interesting events in the course of the second century happened in the time of Anicetus. This was the arrival of Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna, in Rome: and there is tolerable authority for placing it in the year 158^h. The cause of his coming to Rome is not exactly declared: but he had a conference with Anicetus concerning the time of celebrating the Paschal feast; and the disputes upon this subject were carried on so warmly in the second century, that perhaps we are to seek no other reason for Polycarp undertaking so long a journey.

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153.

A. D.
158.

The first day of the week, or Sunday, appears to have been held sacred, on account of our Lord's resurrection, from the very beginning of the Gospel. The Eastern and Western Christians also agreed in keeping a solemn fast for some time preceding the feast of the resurrection. There was, however, one important difference between them. The Asiatic Christians kept what was called the Paschal festival on the fourteenth day of the first month. This was the day on which the Jews ate their paschal lamb:

shop of Vienne in Gaul; but they are evidently spurious. See Baronius, ad an. 166. Le Sneur, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, ad an. 149. Bower, *History of the Popes*, Pius.

^g Iren. I. 25, 6. Epiphan. *Hær.* XXVII. 6. p. 107.

^h Irenæus says it was in the time of Anicetus. *Apud Eus. H. E.* V. 24. The Alexandrian Chronicle and Fasti Siculi name the year 158. See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 167. Pearson *de Rom. Episc.* c. XIV.

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and these Christians also ate a lamb on the same day in commemoration of Christ's death. The Western Christians had likewise a paschal feast: but they kept it on the day immediately preceding the anniversary of the resurrection; and they condemned their brethren in Asia, who, by following the Jewish custom, interrupted the fast of the holy week. Nor was this the only difference between them. The Western Christians always kept the feast of the resurrection on a Sunday, without any reference to the Jewish computation of time: but the Asiatics, who kept the Paschal feast on the fourteenth day of the first month, and the feast of the resurrection on the third day after, were often obliged to keep this latter feast on some of the other days beside Sunday. This appears to have been the real nature of the difference between themⁱ. The controversy arose, not concerning the time of keeping the feast of the resurrection, but the paschal feast which preceded it: and at the time when Polycarp came to Rome, the dispute was beginning to run rather high. Both parties laid claim to apostolical authority for their respective customs: and it is impossible not to admit, that the church of Rome neither claimed nor received any preeminence in settling the dispute. The Eastern Christians asserted that St. John and St. Philip had sanctioned the custom, which was still preserved in Asia; while their brethren at Rome defended themselves by the authority of St. Peter and St. Paul^k. This

ⁱ It is fully explained by Mosheim, *de rebus ante Const.* Cent. II. 71.

^k Dodwell, (*Diss. ad Iren.* I. 28. p. 51.) quotes Irenæus as

saying, that the Jewish custom had prevailed at Rome till the time of Nystus: but his words do not necessarily imply this. Apud Eus. *H. E.* V. 24.

being the case, and neither of the parties being willing to concede, a conference between an Asiatic bishop and the bishop of Rome seemed a very desirable measure. If Polycarp was willing at his advanced age to undertake the journey, there was no person so well qualified to manage the discussion. He had been personally known to St. John, and appointed by him to his bishopric. The churches, not only of Asia Minor, but of Palestine, looked up to him as bearing a kind of apostolical authority : and it is singular, that, while Anicetus was the seventh bishop of Rome since the beginning of the century, Polycarp had occupied the see of Smyrna during the whole of that time. There was no bishop of any western church who could be compared with him in this respect. The church of Rome was naturally looked up to in those parts, as being situated in the imperial city, and founded by the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. If this church had given way in the paschal controversy, the Asiatic custom would probably have prevailed through the whole of Christendom : but Irenæus, who relates the conference between Anicetus and Polycarp, states expressly that neither of them was able to persuade the other to concede. The meeting however was conducted and terminated in perfect amity. The two bishops were firm, and wedded to their respective customs ; but they probably looked upon the disputed point as one which was not essential, and the bond of peace was not broken between them. As a proof of their mutual good-will, they received the sacrament of the bread and wine together : and it gives us an interesting view of primitive manners, when we read that the bishop

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of Rome allowed Polycarp, out of respect to his age and character, to consecrate the elements^l. The question at issue appears to have continued in the same state as before, and both parties adhered to the custom which they had hitherto followed. It was probably about this period that Melito, bishop of Sardes, published a work upon the paschal controversy^m, and he is known to have taken the same view with Polycarpⁿ: but this did not hinder him from being looked up to with the highest esteem, both in his lifetime and afterwards, by the whole of Christendom.

The visit of Polycarp to Rome was not however without its consequences. It was impossible for him not to observe the havoc which Gnosticism was making with the church; and this may have had some effect in urging him to so long a journey. The Gnostics had now established themselves in Rome, and it may have been the fear of encountering Polycarp which made them prefer that city to their former settlement in Asia Minor. There is some evidence that Marcion was rebuked by Polycarp before he visited Rome^o: and the venerable bishop appears to have followed him, in the hopes of counteracting the effect of his teaching. He is said to have brought back many of the Roman Christians, who had adopted Gnosticism^p: and an anecdote is preserved, which is perhaps more suited

^l Valesius (ad Eus. *H. E.* V. 24.) allows that this is the meaning of Irenæus, though some Roman catholics have endeavoured to give a different interpretation of his words, ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παρεχώρησεν ὁ Ἀνίκη-

τος τὴν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ Πολυκάρπῳ κατ' ἐντροπὴν δηλονότι.

^m Eus. *H. E.* IV. 26.

ⁿ *Ib.* V. 24.

^o See page 106.

^p Eus. *H. E.* IV. 14.

to biography than to history, but which is valuable as being reported by Irenæus, who had himself conversed with Polycarp. He tells us, that the bishop was on one occasion met by Marcion, who asked him for some sign of recognition, but the only reply which he received was, "I recognise the first-born of Satan." It is not certain whether the meeting took place in Rome^q or elsewhere: but it shews that these two persons were once personally in contact, and that Gnosticism could cause even the mildness of Polycarp to be exchanged for harshness and asperity.

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This is perhaps the place for mentioning Hegesippus, the earliest ecclesiastical historian of whom we have any account. It seems indeed hardly possible, that any person could have anticipated him in such an undertaking. He must have been born early in the second century: and if he was a Jew, as is generally supposed, he must have had means of preserving traditions concerning our Lord and his Apostles, which are now lost. He wrote a work in five books, which seems to have been doctrinal as well as historical. Part of it was perhaps written in the reign of Hadrian; but he came to Rome while Anicetus was bishop, and we have particularly to lament that the account which he gave of the bishops of Rome up to that period has not come down to us^r. In a fragment which is preserved, he speaks with great satisfaction of the uniformity of faith which he found in all the churches that he visited on his way to Rome. He stayed some

^q This seems to be asserted by Jerom, *Catal. Script. Polycarp.*

^r See Eus. *H. E.* IV. 22.

A. D. 158. time at Corinth, where Primus^s was bishop ; and up to that time at least the Corinthian church was perfectly sound. It is only in this way that a few scattered facts in ecclesiastical history are to be collected. Hegesippus himself, if his writings had survived, might have enabled us to supply many deficiencies. Some persons have inferred that his value as an historian would not have been great ; and what Jerom says of the simplicity of his style, has been construed to bear an unfavourable sense. He may perhaps have been credulous, and of little critical discernment in writing of the age which preceded him : but when he was relating events of the second century, he was treating of his own times : and any history of the church at that period, written by a contemporary, must have been full of interest. He appears to have died while Eleutherus was bishop of Rome, perhaps about the year 180.

A. D. 161. The eventful period, during which Anicetus was bishop of Rome, continued for twelve years : but the death of Antoninus, which happened in the course of it, requires me to say a few words concerning his conduct to the Christians. I have noticed some statements which speak of him as treating them with kindness : and the evidence of Tertullian is express to one point, that he published no special edict against them^t. We may therefore conclude, that the Christians during this reign were in the same situation with respect to the laws as in the time of Hadrian : but this negative clemency of

^s If we could believe the story of the council held at Corinth (v. page 103.) it would seem probable that Primus suc-

ceeded Apollonius. He seems to have been himself succeeded by Dionysius.

^t Apol. 5.

the emperors did not protect the Christians from private malice, or from acts of popular violence: and the Apology of Justin Martyr, though it may shew that Antoninus was willing to hear reason, is a convincing proof that persecution was carried on even in his capital. He died in the year 161; and it was perhaps not long before his death that the letter was written, to which I have already alluded, and which is ascribed by many critics to his successor, M. Aurelius. It is certain that one of these emperors wrote to the cities of Asia Minor in favour of the Christians; and though the author and date of this document have led to many discussions, we may perhaps agree with those persons who ascribe it to both the Antonines. In this case it was perhaps written in the year 161; and it was either the work of M. Aurelius soon after his accession^u, or it ran in both their names, and was written shortly before the death of Antoninus Pius^x.

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The emperor had received solicitations from many quarters to proceed against the Christians: and it was urged, that the Gods were shewing their indignation by visiting the country with earthquakes. This was a common artifice for raising hostility to the Christians in the time of any public calamity: and the emperor shewed very plainly that he did not mean to treat the question as one merely of religion. He referred to the edicts of his predecessors, which required a Christian to be con-

^u Valesius ad Eus. *II. E.* much earlier. *Ist. Eccles.* vol. IV. 13. II. p. 118, and Tillemont, *Mé-*

^x Baratrie de *Success. Pont.* moires, tom. II. part. 2. p. 599. *Rom.* p. 200. Orsi places it

A. D. 161. victed of a criminal offence before he could be punished; and he was so far from relaxing the justice of this principle, that he concluded his letter by saying, that if any one proceeded against another merely for being a Christian, the Christian should be acquitted, even if he avowed his profession, and the accusing party should be punished.

Such was the situation in which the Christians stood with regard to the laws at the beginning of the reign of M. Aurelius and L. Verus. These two persons had been adopted by Antoninus Pius, and held the empire conjointly till the year 169, when M. Aurelius obtained sole possession by the death of his colleague Verus. It was before this event that another act of indulgence was shewn to the Christians; for the Pandects speak of these two emperors having made them eligible to hold public offices^y. The permission is said to have been given to those who followed the Jewish superstition; but there can be little doubt that the Christians were intended; and it is added, that the securities demanded from them were such as were not likely to hurt their religious feelings. If this permission was given early in the present reign, it was probably the act of M. Aurelius alone, though the name of his colleague was added in the public edict; for L. Verus set out for the Parthian war in 161, and was absent at least four years. It would be interesting to think that the emperor was moved to shew this indulgence to the Christians by reading the second Apology of Justin Martyr. The date of this document, like that of other events connected

^y L. III. ff. *de decurion.*

with Justin's history, has been much contested : A. D.
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but Eusebius expressly states it to have been addressed to M. Aurelius and L. Verus ; by which he may have meant that it was written during their reign ; and since Justin appears to address only one emperor, we may perhaps ascribe his second Apology to the period when Verus was absent in his eastern campaigns, that is, to some time between the years 161 and 165.^z

We learn from this second Apology, that the Christians had for some time been exposed to severe persecution. We shall see presently that this was the case in distant provinces ; but Justin speaks of what had taken place in Rome, under the immediate eye of the emperor. An officer named Urbicus, who has been thought to have commanded the prætorian guards, put several persons to death, merely because they were Christians ; and the names of Ptolemy and Lucius are placed in the list of martyrs, upon the unquestionable authority of Justin himself. This conduct of Urbicus seems expressly contrary to the edicts of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, and forms one of the many difficulties attending the history of the early persecutions. We learn also from a contemporary document^a, that edicts were issued about this time in different countries, by which the Christians were ordered to sacrifice to the Gods, or to suffer capitally. The edict is said to have been issued by the emperor : and yet we have the authority of Tertullian for saying, that no law was enacted against the Chris-

^z See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 605. tyrdom. The edict is given at length in the Acts of Symphorianus. *Ruinart*, p. 80.

^a The Acts of Justin's mar-

A. D. 161-165. tians by M. Aurelius^b. All this appears very contradictory: and I would repeat the remark which has already been made, that we shall have a more correct view of ecclesiastical history, if we cease to speak of certain definite persecutions ordered by particular emperors, and if we look upon the Christians, through the whole of the second century, as exposed more or less to the malice of their enemies. The philosophers, the priests, or an excited populace, might all in their turns be the cause of these cruelties. Sometimes they would unite their efforts: and in such cases there was little need of an emperor's edict or permission to shed the blood of men who were accused of disrespect to the Gods, as well as to the emperor. The history of Justin informs us, that a Cynical philosopher, named Crescens, was able to gratify his malice by putting Christians to death: and this was perhaps only one instance out of many, where the philosophers stood up as defending the national religion against the Christians. Justin however appealed at once to the emperor against these barbarities: and though it cannot be denied that the laws had been violated without the emperor taking any notice, I should rather infer, that Justin did not suspect him personally of originating the persecution. When applied to in particular cases, he may have allowed a magistrate to act with severity, or he may have sent an answer which was construed more harshly than he intended^c; but at this time he had pro-

^b Apol. 5. He says, *by Verus*, but Baronius (ad an. 164. 1.) proves that this means M. Aurelius.

^c As an instance of this, we have a rescript of his in the Pandects, "Relegandos esse in insulam, qui aliquid fecerint,

bably published no general edict, by which the Christians were placed in a worse condition than before; and the fact of his allowing them, under certain restrictions, to hold office, is a proof that at some period at least he was inclined to do them justice.

I have stated that this indulgence must have been granted between the years 161 and 169, and that Justin's second Apology was probably presented between the years 161 and 165; so that it is very possible for the emperor's mind to have been worked upon by the spirited appeal contained in this Apology^d. Political privileges were not however at present the object of the Christians: they wanted an immunity from atrocious calumnies, and from the fury of the people who were excited to call for their blood. The emperor either could not or would not protect them from these outrages; and the history of Justin was brought to a close by his suffering martyrdom shortly after the presentation of his second Apology. The date of his death is not exactly ascertained: but there are good grounds for placing it not far from the year 165.^e The following year would furnish a very probable occasion for an act of violence of this kind. It was then that the two emperors celebrated their triumph for the victories of

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“quo leves hominum animi
“superstitione numinis tene-
“antur.” *De Pæn.* c. 30.

^d Baronius (ad an. 163.) relates that M. Aurelius, in the first year of his reign, made a present to the Christians of Hierapolis, because his daughter Lucilla, who was affianced to L. Verus, was cured of an evil

spirit by Abercius, bishop of that city. But the story is refuted by Pagi.

^e So Pagi (ad an. 165.) after the Alexandrian Chronicle. Barattier places it in 161; Tillemont in 167 or 168; Papebrochius in 170. See Grabe, *Spi-cileg.* Sæc. II. p. 144.

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Verus in his Parthian war; and the licentious excesses of such a festivity were generally enhanced by an attack upon the Christians. They were likely also to suffer from another consequence of the eastern campaign. The soldiers upon their return to Rome brought with them a pestilential disorder of great malignity^f. The mortality was prodigious; and we know that visitations of this kind were generally attributed to the anger of the Gods, who resented the insults offered to them by the Christians. Justin appears to have suffered martyrdom about this period. He was taken before Rusticus^g, the prefect of the city, and upon confessing himself a Christian, and refusing to sacrifice to the Gods, he was ordered, together with his companions, to be first scourged, and then beheaded. The sentence was executed immediately; and the name of Martyr has been applied to him as a distinction from very early times.

A man of learning like Justin Martyr, who even after his conversion was known by the name of the Philosopher, could not fail to be looked up to by those of the same religion, and to attract many followers. Among the latter we find the name of Tatian, a native of Assyria, who had travelled in various countries, and at length visited Rome. It was here most probably that he met with Justin Martyr, and he is always spoken of as his disciple; but he tells us himself that he was converted to Christianity by reading the books of the Old Testament, and Justin perhaps enabled him to cultivate

^f Jul. Capit. in *M. Aurel.* Rusticus, from whom M. Aurelius was instructed in the Stoical philosophy.
^g He was probably Junius

the seed which had already been sown. He was a sufferer in the same persecution which was fatal to his master: and in a work which he published about this period, he draws a frightful picture of Crescens the Cynic, whose hostility to the Christians was mentioned in Justin's second Apology. Tatian is said to have been a voluminous writer^h; but the only work which has come down to us is that which I have just mentioned, and which is entitled an Oration against the Greeks or Gentiles. In this treatise he attacks the heathen so openly and unsparingly, that it is difficult to account for his escaping with his life, while Justin was put to death. We know however that he survived for some years; and if he left Rome upon the death of his master, as is stated by Epiphaniusⁱ, this will perhaps explain how he saved himself from martyrdom. He then returned to the East: and it is painful to read the statement of Irenæus^k, his contemporary, that his opinions continued perfectly sound during the lifetime of Justin, but that he fell into heresy when his master was no more. He is charged with embracing the errors of Valentinus and Marcion, both of whom he may perhaps have encountered at Rome: but it seems to have been during his residence in the East that he was attracted by some of their doctrines; and his name has acquired a celebrity by being placed at the head of a sect, which was called that of the Encratites, from their leading a life of severe and rigid mortification. I shall have occasion to mention

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^h Eus. *H. E.* IV. 29. Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

ⁱ Hær. XLVI. 1. p. 391.

^k I. 28. 1. p. 107.

A. D. 166. these heretics more at length hereafter : at present I shall only repeat what has been observed already, that when Tatian adopted these opinions, he must have followed Marcion rather than Valentinus ; and while he was at Antioch in Syria, where he is said to have fixed his principal residence, he would meet with some of the disciples of Saturninus, who had founded an ascetic school in that city at the beginning of the century¹. It was probably in Asia that he had for one of his hearers a person named Rhodon, who afterwards became a writer of some celebrity. He did not however follow his master in his erroneous opinions, but undertook to write a book in refutation of one which Tatian had published, and distinguished himself also by a discussion with Apelles, who was a disciple of Marcion^m.

There is good evidence that Rome was not the only place in which the Christians were treated with cruelty about this period. The middle of the second century seems to have been marked by persecutions in different parts of the world : and though local or temporary causes may frequently have operated, there can be little doubt that the great and ultimate cause was the increasing progress of the Gospel. Justin Martyr speaks of the religion of Christ having reached the remotest regionsⁿ : and if this astonishing effect had been produced in little more than one century, there was good reason for the advocates of paganism to feel serious alarm. The church of Athens was likely to be exposed to danger as being in the midst of men who prided themselves

¹ For the history and opinions of Tatian, see Ittigius, *de Hæresiarchis*, II. 12. p. 199.

^m Eus. V. 13.

ⁿ Dial. cum Tryph. 117.

p. 210.

upon their learning. We have seen however that the learning of the Athenians was not entirely confined to the heathen: and I have mentioned that Quadratus, who presented an Apology to Hadrian about the year 125, was afterwards bishop of Athens. His promotion perhaps did not take place till several years later. He succeeded Publius, who is known to have suffered martyrdom: and though the date of this event is uncertain, there are good grounds for placing it at the period which we are now considering. The persecution, which was fatal to Publius, appears to have been extremely violent: and this will perhaps account for the words of a contemporary writer, who speaks of the Athenians, after the martyrdom of their bishop, having almost abandoned their faith. This writer was Dionysius^o, the bishop of the neighbouring church of Corinth; who seems to have been a man of great piety as well as learning, though none of his writings have come down to us. He lived in trying times, when the doctrines as well as the lives of his fellow Christians were in danger from open and secret enemies: and the bishop of Corinth provided, not only for the safety of his own immediate flock, but for the members of other and distant churches. Eusebius mentions several of his letters; and we learn from them that there were churches in Sparta, Nicomedia, Pontus, and in more than one city of Crete. They were all at this time under the government of bishops, and Dionysius wrote to them, either

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^o Apud Eus. *II. E. IV. 23.* may have been succeeded by
He probably succeeded Pri- Bacchylus, Eus. *V. 22.*
mus, (see p. 126. note.) and

A. D. 166. exhorting them to unity, or guarding them against Gnostic errors.

His letter to the Athenians was called forth by the symptoms which he perceived of their faith giving way under the severity of persecution. The see appears for some time at least to have continued vacant: and it was either in that interval, or soon after the appointment of Quadratus, that Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher, has been supposed to have presented an address to the emperors M. Aurelius and L. Verus. There are, however, good grounds for supposing him to have presented it several years later^p: and if he was president of the catechetical school in Alexandria, as one writer^q has asserted, his work had perhaps no connexion with the persecution at Athens. According to this same writer, his history is a very interesting one; for he is said to have studied the Scriptures with a view to publishing a refutation of Christianity, and to have finished his perusal by becoming a believer. His work was entitled *An Embassy in behalf of the Christians*, and he presented it at a period of profound peace; that is, when the empire was not disturbed by external wars; for such [periods were seasons of any thing rather than peace to the unhappy Christians. This may support the notion of Athenagoras having written his address in the year 166^r, when the emperors celebrated their triumph

^p A.D. 177. v. Mosheim, *Diss. de vera atate Apol. Athenag.*

^q Philippus Sides, apud Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.*

^r See Pagiad Baron. an. 179. He wrote another work, which is still extant, concerning the Resurrection of the dead. For

his history, see Guerike *de Schola Alexandr.* p. 21. Leyserus, *Diss. de Athenag.* He was suspected of being a Montanist by Tillemont, *Mém.* tom. II. part. 2. p. 279. and Conringius, *Prolegom. de Scriptor. sac.* XV. p. 59.

for the victories in Parthia, and before they set out for the war with the Marcomanni: and the title of the work might seem to imply, that Athenagoras undertook a kind of embassy to Rome. We are not informed whether he succeeded in improving the condition of the Christians. His work acquaints us with the horrid calumnies which were spread against them, and the iniquitous sufferings which they were made to undergo. The governors of provinces are stated to have been unequal to the number of cases which were brought to their tribunals: and though this may shew that the forms of justice were observed, and the more favourable decrees of Hadrian and Antoninus were still in force, there is abundant proof that the enemies of the Christians were able to carry their point, and that on some pretence or other, either by a forced construction of the laws, or by the overpowering clamours of the mob, the believers in Christ were exposed on all sides to sufferings and death. Still, however, there is no proof that the emperor himself originated or encouraged these illegal punishments: he ought, undoubtedly, to have hindered them: but the fact of so many persons presenting their addresses to the head of the government, is perhaps a proof that he was known to be less inclined to severity than those who held office under him. It is satisfactory to find that the Athenian church recovered from its state of depression, as soon as Quadratus had succeeded to the bishopric^s.

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If we now turn our eyes from the Roman and Grecian churches to those of Asia Minor, we shall

^s The⁵ Roman Martyrology speaks of Quadratus suffering martyrdom, Maii 26.

- A. D. 166. find reason to think that the persecution was carried on with still greater fury in those parts. The persons, who remembered St. John while he resided at Ephesus, must now have been reduced to a small number. Polycarp, however, survived beyond the middle of the century, and Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, is also said to have conversed with some of the Apostles. Both of these venerable bishops received their crown of martyrdom about the period at which we are now arrived. The death of Polycarp is matter of most authentic history; but that of Papias rests upon less certain evidence, and we know nothing concerning its details. The only authority which we have for his martyrdom^t, fixes its date precisely to the year 163, and states it to have taken place at Pergamus. There is nothing improbable in a bishop of Hierapolis being put to death at Pergamus about this period: and there is some evidence, that the bishopric of Hierapolis was held shortly after by Abercius, who may perhaps have been appointed upon the death of Papias^u. Abercius is said to have been exposed to much personal suffering, and to have addressed a letter to the emperor M. Aurelius^x: but he probably did not hold the bishopric long, since Eusebius, shortly after speaking of the eighth year of this emperor, names Apollinarius as bishop of Hierapolis^y. He was perhaps appointed upon the death of Abercius: and since Eusebius also speaks of his presenting an apology to
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^t Steph. Gobarus (*apud Photium*, cod. 232.) calls him a martyr. Chron. Alexandr. an. 4. Olymp. 235.

^u Menolog. Græc. ad 22 Octob. See Halloix, *Vit. Script.*

Orient. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2 p. 241.

^x Baronius had a copy of it, but lost it: ad an. 163. num. 15.

^y H. E. IV. 21, 26.

the emperor, we have sufficient evidence that the church of Hierapolis was suffering for several years from persecution

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The character of Papias has been attacked and defended by many writers^z. Eusebius speaks of him in one place^a as extremely learned; and in another^b as having very little judgment: which two expressions may easily be reconciled, and contain perhaps the true account. His proximity to the apostolical times, if not his personal acquaintance with some of the Apostles, would put him in possession of many facts, which would be very interesting for us to know: and if his work in five books, entitled *An Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, had come down to us, we should have learnt many anecdotes concerning our Saviour and his Apostles, which are now entirely lost. The Apostle Philip appears to have passed his latter years at Hierapolis^c, and Papias may have seen many persons who remembered his residence there. It is probable that he exercised little discretion in selecting materials for his work: and it may have been the same combination of learning with a deficiency of judgment, which led him to introduce some strange doctrines into the church concerning a millennium. It is always said that Papias was the first to propagate such a notion: and his early date may lead us to conclude that such was the fact. He believed that, previous to the final judgment, there would be a resurrection of the just, who would reign with Christ upon earth for a thousand years. Eusebius, who

^z He is attacked by Casaubon, *Exercit.* XVI. num. 16. and defended by Halloix.

^a H. E. III. 36.

^b Ib. 39.

^c See Lecture XI. p. 331.

A. D. 163. acquaints us with this fact, is probably right, when he says that Papias misinterpreted the apostolical declarations, and misunderstood their figurative expressions. But the extensive reading of this simple-minded man may also have contributed to form his belief upon this point. There is evidence that the Gnostics expected a millennium: and Gnosticism, which was compounded of Platonism, the Oriental doctrines, and the Jewish Cabbala, might have found in all those systems some mystical allusions to a future period of terrestrial enjoyment. Cerinthus seems undoubtedly to have held this notion^d, and it has been ascribed also to the Ebionites^e: but unless Cerinthus has been greatly misrepresented, his ideas upon this subject were of the grossest and most sensual kind. The adversaries of Papias have never charged him with similar indecencies: and when it is said that the Fathers were many of them believers in a millennium, we ought carefully to distinguish between the doctrine as it was delivered by Papias, and as it was debased and corrupted by the wanton imagination of Cerinthus^f. There is no doubt that Justin Martyr believed that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, and that Christians would rise again to enjoy the society of their Redeemer for 1000 years. He tells us this in his own writings^g; but he adds at the same time, that there were many Christians of sound and religious minds, who did not agree with him in this notion. It was also entertained by Ire-

^d Caius *apud Eus. H. E. III. Sæc. I. Sel. cap. 5. 31. p. 291.*
 28. Dionysius, *ib.* Jablonski *de Regno Millenario*

^e Hieron. *in Esaiam, LXVI. Cerinthi.*
 20. vol. IV. p. 823. ^g Dial. cum Tryph. 51. p.

^f See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles.* 147: 80. p. 177: 139. p. 230.

næus at the end of the second century, who refers to Papias, as having preceded him in this belief; and, according to Jerom^b, there had been a personal acquaintance between Papias and Irenæus. Tertulian likewise defended it in his writings; which he was bound to do, after he had become a Montanist, since it formed a part of the creed maintained by that party: and this is sufficient to shew, that a notion, which is wholly unsupported by Scripture, could find advocates among the most learned of the Christian writers. We have seen, however, that a disbelief of the doctrine caused no dissension in the church; and before the end of the third century, the Millenarians, or Chiliasts, were looked upon as decidedly in errorⁱ.

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We should not need the authority of Eusebius for assuming that Papias and Polycarp were friends. The distance between Hierapolis and Smyrna was not great. The lives of both of them were protracted to an unusual length; and Polycarp accompanied his venerable friend to the same termination of all his earthly sufferings. His martyrdom will occupy the beginning of the following Lecture.

^b Epist. LXXV. 3. vol. I. p. 450. ⁱ Bampt. Lectures, note. 76.

LECTURE XIX.

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167.

THERE are perhaps few events in ecclesiastical history, which may be received with greater certainty than the martyrdom of Polycarp. A detailed account of it, which is still extant, was written by the church of Smyrna, of which he was bishop; and copies of the letter appear to have been sent to different churches of Asia Minor. It seems most probable that he suffered about the period which we are now considering; though the exact year of his death has led to so many different opinions, that it would be presumptuous to attempt to settle it^a. Eusebius appears to assign it to the year 167; though it has been placed by modern writers as early as 147, and as late as 175. The former part of the reign of M. Aurelius presents the most probable time for this tragical event; and the same scene of cruelty, which was exhibited at Smyrna, had been witnessed in most of the cities of Asia Minor. Several other persons were martyred together with Polycarp. An exhibition of games kept the city in excitement for some days, and the Christians were made to fight with wild beasts for the amusement of the populace. Polycarp himself was advised to withdraw from the storm, and he concealed

^a See a dissertation of Longuerue in Winckler's *Sylloge Anecdotorum*, p. 18, 25. Tille-
mont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 566.

himself for some time at a short distance from the city. His retreat was however discovered: and though his piety and composure affected some of the party who were sent to seize him, he was hurried to the amphitheatre, where the multitude was assembled and calling aloud for his blood. The proconsul Quadratus^b did not attempt to restrain them. He made a show of pitying the age of Polycarp, and insulted him by exhorting him to swear by the name of the emperor: but when he held out the hopes of pardon, if he would utter imprecations against Christ, the venerable bishop made no other reply than, “Eighty and six years^c have I served Him, and He has done me no injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?”

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The order observed in the games did not allow the wild beasts to be introduced again that day, and it was agreed that Polycarp should be burnt. The zeal of the people soon collected fuel, and the Jews were observed to be particularly active in this work of cruelty. When the holy martyr was bound to the stake and had uttered a prayer, the fire was kindled: but if we may believe the contemporary account, instead of consuming the body, it formed round it a kind of arch, and a fragrant smell was perceived to issue from it. The latter circumstance may have been the effect of fancy; but there must have been something extraordinary in the tardy progress of the flames, or an officer would not have been ordered to run his sword through the body. When

^b There was a consul of this name in 142. It has been thought that Aristides speaks of Quadratus as proconsul of Asia in the seventh of M. Aurelius.

^c It is doubted whether he was now eighty-six years old, or whether eighty-six years had passed since his conversion.

A. D. 167. this was done, and life was evidently extinct, the malice of the Jews was exercised still farther, in their urging the proconsul not to let the Christians take the body, lest they should proceed, as these calumniators insinuated, to give up Jesus and worship Polycarp. The testimony is remarkable, as shewing the notoriety of the fact, that Jesus was an object of worship; and I must not omit the observation of the writers of this letter, that the case anticipated by the Jews was perfectly impossible: Jesus, they observe, and Jesus only, could be the object of their worship: to him, as the Son of God, they offered adoration: but the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, were merely objects of gratitude and love. The proconsul then ordered the dead body of Polycarp to remain on the fire till it was consumed, and his friends were permitted to carry away the bones. We learn also from this interesting letter, that the custom already existed of meetings being held at the graves of the martyrs; and on the anniversary of their death, which was called their birthday, the Christians assembled to commemorate their history^d. The service resembled that of the Sunday. The Lord's Supper was eaten; collections were made for the poor; and the acts of the martyr, whose death was being commemorated, were publicly read. This was the origin of those numerous histories which we find in the martyrologies; some of which are undoubtedly fabulous, and the inventions of a later age; but some may be received as genuine and authentic documents. These birthdays became subsequently very numerous, and the progress of superstition, which was perhaps not

^d See Tertull. *de Coron. Mil.* 3. Cypr. *Epist.* 34. 37.

unnatural, may easily be traced: but the case of Polycarp, though it shews that such commemorations existed in the second century, is also a proof that the worship of relics had not as yet been thought of among Christians^e.

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The letter quoted above informs us, that the persecution ceased with the death of Polycarp. The remark is perhaps to be confined to the church of Smyrna. When the great leader of the Christians was no more, and the exhibition of games had ceased, the populace did not call for any more victims: but the thirst for Christian blood was not allayed in other cities of Asia, and there is reason to think that it shortly after revived in Smyrna itself, though the earthquake, which nearly destroyed the city about the year 175, may have checked for a while the rage of persecution. Thraseas, bishop of Eumenia, suffered martyrdom there in this or the following reign^f: and if we may believe a late writer^g, that Papirius succeeded Polycarp in the bishopric, we may perhaps add, on contemporary authority^h, that he died by martyrdom. A similar fate befell Sagaris in Laodicea, of which place he was bishop, while Servilius Paulus was proconsul of Asiaⁱ. I have also mentioned, that Apollinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, presented a Defence of Christianity to M. Aurelius about this period, which seems

^e See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sac. II. Sel. cap. III. 3, 4. p. 196. IV. 45. p. 268.* Kortholt. *de Calumniis Paganorum, c. 7.*

^f Apollonius *apud Eus. H. E. V. 18.* Polycrates, *ib. 24.*

^g Symeon Metaphrast. *Vit. Polycarp.*

^h Polycrates, l. c. He was

succeeded by Camerius, *Sym. Metaphr.* Irenæus speaks of more than one bishop having succeeded Polycarp: and Irenæus wrote between the years 180 and 189. *III. 3.*

ⁱ Melito, *apud Eus. H. E. IV. 26.* Polycrates, l. c.

A. D. 167. to indicate that his church was suffering persecution. But if any evidence was wanting of the sufferings which the Christians underwent in Asia Minor during this reign, we may refer to another Apology presented to the same emperor by Melito, bishop of Sardes. Eusebius gives the titles of many other works which he composed^k, and he seems to have left a considerable name as a man of learning; but we have particularly to regret that his Defence of Christianity has shared the fate of all his other compositions^l. We learn from a small fragment of it, that the work of persecution was then at its height, and that the magistrates were acting under the authority of some new decree: but the bishop expresses his conviction that the emperor had not issued any edict, which sanctioned such outrages upon the lives and property of the Christians. This confirms what I have already remarked, that the persecution is not to be considered as the work of the emperor himself: and we may infer from the account of Polycarp's martyrdom, that some general law had been proclaimed, by which all persons were required to swear by the fortune or genius of the emperor. The nature of this oath does not appear at first very intelligible: but it is certain that the Christians refused to take it^m. They felt that in some way or other it implied a belief in a plurality of Gods: and the persons who persuaded the emperor to issue such an edict, were perhaps well

^k H. E. IV. 26.

^l Orsi says that it was presented in 177. *Ist. Eccles.* vol. II. p. 255. So also Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 3. p.

113.

^m Origen. *cont. Cels.* VIII. 65. Tertull. *Apol.* 32, 33, 34. Kortholt. *de Vita et Moribus Christianis*, VII. 2, 3. *de Calumn. Pagan.* XIX.

aware of the effect which it would have upon the Christians, though it did not profess, and was not intended by the emperor, to be directed specially against them. We have also seen, when considering the death of Justin Martyrⁿ, that an edict is mentioned, by which all persons were to sacrifice to the gods, or to suffer capitally. This also may have been issued by the emperor without any special intention of harassing the Christians: but the fatal effect of it, when left to the execution of provincial magistrates, is plainly depicted in the writings of the Christian apologists. An expression in Melito's Apology has been thought to shew, that persons were induced to accuse the Christians, by having their property adjudged to them in case of conviction^o.

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It would be interesting to know that these repeated appeals produced an effect upon the philosophical mind of M. Aurelius. Some persons have supposed, (and the conjecture is plausible,) that the letter addressed to the cities of Asia Minor, which I have assigned to the year 161^p, was written by him in consequence of these numerous Apologies, and that he wished to put a stop to the cruelties which were practised in Asia Minor. I cannot however retract the opinion, that the letter was written before the death of Antoninus Pius; and whatever date we assign to it, it seems but too evident that the persons in authority contrived to evade it. The cities of Asia Minor, and particularly those to which St. John addressed his Epistles, appear to have witnessed these cruelties for several years at the beginning of

ⁿ See page 129.

ante Const. cent. II. §. 15

^o See Mosheim *de Rebus*

^p See page 127.

A. D. 167. this reign; and in attempting to describe them I have not attended minutely to chronological^q order.

The empire, as I have stated, was for nine years under two supreme governors: and for five years of that period L. Verus was absent in his Parthian campaigns. It is probable, therefore, that he took no interest during that time in the concerns of the Christians^q. His colleague in the meanwhile was stationary at Rome, or at least in Italy. I have mentioned that in the year 166 they celebrated their triumph for the Parthian war: and it seems probable that they did not leave the city till 168.

A. D. 168. There were many opportunities for persecution during these two years. There being now two emperors upon the throne, their anniversary festivals recurred more frequently; and the pestilence, to which I have alluded as being imported from the east, continued to rage for some years. On both these accounts the Christians were likely to be sufferers; and their firmness attracted the notice of the celebrated Galen, who lived at this time, and whose medical skill was called forth by the severity of the plague. He evidently looked upon them with contempt: but at the same time he bore testimony to the constancy with which they adhered to their doctrines^r.

^q It is possible, that the work of Bardesanes *de Fato*, which is said to have been addressed to Antoninus, (*Eus.* IV. 30.) was presented to L. Verus while he was in the east.

^r Citius enim Moysis asseclæ et Christi decedant de sua disciplina, quam qui sectis sunt addicti et consecrati, medici

et philosophi. *De Puls. Diff.* III. 3. Ne quis initio statim, quasi in Moysis et Christi scholam impingat, leges audiat nulla constitutas demonstratione. *Ib.* II. 4. Lucian alludes to the contempt of death which was shewn by the Christians, and attributes it to their belief in a resurrection. *De Morte*

If we may follow Eusebius, the year 168 was marked by a change of bishops in some of the principal sees. Anicetus, who had held that of Rome from the year 156, was now succeeded by Soter. Baronius represents him as being martyred, which he says of every one of the bishops who preceded him: but I have already said, that there is little reason to believe it of any of them, except Telesphorus. Celadion the bishop of Alexandria was in this same year succeeded by Agrippinus, but only the names of them have come down to us. We might say much more of Theophilus, who was at this time elected bishop of Antioch in the room of Heros. He had been bred up in heathenism, and was evidently addicted to the Platonic philosophy; but he afterwards became not only a bishop in the Christian church, but a voluminous writer upon subjects connected with the Gospel. One of these works, which he addressed to a heathen friend named Autolytus, has come down to us^s. It appears to have been written at the beginning of the following reign, or about the year 180; and though some persons have objected to the mixture of Christian ideas and

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Peregrini, c. 13. Arrian speaks of them under the name of Galileans, and attributes their fortitude to custom or habit. *Epict.* IV. 7. Lactantius mentions a Bithynian philosopher, who wrote against the Christians, and called upon them, ut pertinaci obstinatione deposita, corporis cruciamenta devitent, neu sævas membrorum lacerationes frustra perpeti velint. V. 2.

^s Dodwell considered the author of this work to be a different person from the bishop of Antioch: (*Addit. ad Pears. de Success.* p. 11 :) but he is not followed in this notion. A Latin commentary upon the four Gospels is extant, which bears the name of Theophilus, and some persons have supposed it to be a work of the third century. See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Select. cap. I.* 25. p. 31.

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expressions with those which belong to the Platonic philosophy, a careful perusal of the work will confirm the remark already made, that Platonism had by this time been materially altered, and that when a Christian spoke in the language of Plato, he adapted it to doctrines, which the followers of Plato had never heard of till they came in contact with the Christians. Theophilus was the author of other works which are now lost, one of which was directed against an heretic, named Hermogenes: and I mention it as shewing how deeply the Christians entered into all the speculations and controversies which were then carried on in the learned world. Hermogenes was by profession a painter, and appears to have been a Christian, though led away by the Gnostic philosophy. He then professed himself a Stoic, and the point which he principally laboured to defend, was the eternity of Matter. This, as I have stated, was a favourite topic with all the Gnostics, and entered in fact into every system of heathen philosophy. Hermogenes seems to have dwelt upon it with particular fondness, and he perhaps endeavoured to shew that this did not disqualify him from continuing a Christian. He did not deny that Matter could have been created out of nothing, but he held that God would not have created it, because it is the source of all evil. He believed that the human soul, and even the evil spirits, had their origin from Matter; but his opinions do not appear to have been unsound upon other points. He probably flourished about the period which we are now considering, and Theophilus wrote in refutation of his opinions. Tertullian also at the end of the cen-

ture published a work against him, which is still extant^t. A. D.
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The number of authors, who now appeared on the side of Christianity, forms a striking feature in the history of the second century. I have mentioned Justin Martyr and his disciple Tatian; and the apologists Quadratus, Aristides, Athenagoras, Apollinarius, Miltiades, and Melito must have made Christianity more known not only in Rome, but in Greece and Asia Minor. The Gnostic heretics, who made great use of the name of Christ, must have led the heathen to inquire into his history; and the names of Christian authors who wrote against the Gnostics, are much more numerous than those of heathen writers in the same period. I have mentioned Agrippa Castor, who wrote against Basilides as early as in the reign of Hadrian. Hegesippus seems to have given an historical account of every heresy. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, provided not only his own flock, but those of other churches with arguments against the Marcionites. The same heretics were attacked by Philip, bishop of Gortyna in Crete, and a writer named Modestus: and all these authors may be spoken of as living in the middle of the second century, a period which was particularly marked by the extent of persecution, when even the profession of Christianity was attended with great personal danger.

The literary taste, which was now cultivated among Christians, may be further illustrated by another description of works, which certainly began to

^t Mosheim is rather inclined to defend Hermogenes against *Rebus ante Const.* cent. II. c. *De the violence of Tertullian.* 70.

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appear before this period, but which at this distance of time we hardly know whether to class among intentional forgeries. I have spoken of the work entitled the Shepherd, which was probably written by Hermas about the year 140, and which has been ascribed by later writers to the Hermas mentioned by St. Paul. The epistle of Barnabas was certainly extant at the end of the second century, and is quoted by Clement of Alexandria as the work of the apostle: it must therefore have been in circulation a considerable time; but modern criticism would find a difficulty in placing it earlier than the former part of the second century^u. In the same way the name of Clement was affixed to several works, which are extremely interesting for their antiquity, though interspersed with much which is absurd; and it is possible that they contain traces of earlier and authentic traditions; but it seems most probable that they were composed at a later period than the works which bear the names of Hermas and Barnabas: nor can we tell, as I have already observed, whether these names were given to them at first with an intention to deceive. An ingenious work was also composed in the second century, if not earlier, which is called *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. It professes to contain prophecies and exhortations delivered by the sons of Jacob shortly before their death, and it bears marks of having been written by a Jew who believed in Christ. Some persons have ascribed it to an Ebionite^x: and it is valuable as

^u See Ittigius, *Select. Hist. Eccles. cap. sæc. l. c. 1. §. XIV.* p. 20, and several writers named by Starck, *Geschichte des 1^{ten}.*

Jahrhunderts, tom. II. p. 384.

^x Beausobre, *Hist. de Manichée*, vol. I. p. 354. Lardner, *Credibility*, XXIX. 3. See

shewing the general belief in those early times, even among heretics, or at least imperfect Christians, that Jesus Christ was not a mere human being. The custom, to which I have already alluded, of tracing a resemblance between Christianity and Platonism, gave rise to another class of works, in which the language of heathen philosophy was adapted to the doctrines of the Gospel. The Sibylline oracles, or the interpolations of them, which were mentioned in a former lecture, may perhaps be traced to this unhappy propensity: and a work has come down to us, entitled *Pœmander*, which may have been written at this period, but which might be ascribed with equal probability to a Christian or an heathen. I need not dwell at any length upon the spurious epistles or decretals, which purport to have been written by the bishops of Rome in the second century. Their forgery is now universally allowed, even by Roman catholics, and they may be proved to be the production of a later age^y. I ought perhaps to speak more strongly, when noticing the apocryphal Gospels and other works of that kind, which were circulated to a great extent in the second and third centuries. We have the authority of Irenæus^z for saying, that many of these books were composed by the Gnostics. Being unable to reconcile their doctrines with the canonical scriptures, they gave out that they were in possession of many sayings of Christ and his Apostles, which had not been committed to writing^a. The Ebionites^b and Cerinthians

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Grabe, *Spicileg. Patr.* I. *Sæc.*
p. 129. Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles*
Sæc. II. *Select. cap.* I. 37.

^z I. 20.

^a Ib. I. 25, 5. p. 104. III. 2.
1. p. 174. Tertull. *de Præscript.*

^y See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles.*
Sæc. II. *Sel. cap.* I. 38.

22. p. 209. 25. p. 210.

^b See Lecture XII. p. 383.

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had Gospels of their own. Others bore the name of Basilides, Marcion, or different Gnostic leaders. Acts and Revelations of nearly all the Apostles were composed; and we read of the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, the Gospel of Nicodemus, and many others which it would be tedious to name. Several of them are ascribed to Leucius, who has been placed by some critics in the second century, while others have taken him for a Manichee, who wrote in the third century^c. There is the same uncertainty as to the date of many of these spurious works: but the Gospel of Jude is mentioned by Irenæus^d; the Gospel of Peter, by Serapion, bishop of Antioch^e; the Preaching of Peter, by Clement of Alexandria^f; and the Acts of Paul and Thecla by Tertullian^g. These therefore must have existed as early as the middle of the second century, or perhaps earlier; and the names of many others might be added. With respect to their authors, though we are warranted in ascribing many of them to Gnostics, it is to be feared that Christians were sometimes betrayed into a composition of similar forgeries. In an unguarded moment they thought to serve their cause by what have been called pious frauds: and the names of Apostles and other early teachers were affixed to writings, which contained the most absurd and extravagant fictions^h.

^c See Beausobre, *Hist. de Manichée*, tom. I. p. 349.

^d I. 31. 1. p. 112.

^e Apud Eus. *II. E.* VI. 12.

^f Strom. VI. p. 759. 764.

^g V. Casaub. in Baron. Exerc. I. num. 10. Grabe, *Spicileg.* vol. I. p. 87.

^h For information upon this subject I would refer to Fabricius, *Cod. Apoc. N. T.* Grabe, *Spicileg. Patr.* Mosheim, *Diss. de Causis Suppos. lib.* Ittigius *de Hæresiarch.* Append. p. 118. Le Sueur, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, ad an. 145.

Another class of heretics was now rising into notice, if they had not existed for some time before, which caused nearly as much sensation in the Christian world as the numerous systems of Gnosticism. This was the heresy which took its name from Montanus, whose date has been placed by one writerⁱ as early as the year 126. He contends that it cannot be brought later than 138; and though Eusebius speaks of Montanism beginning about the year 172^k, he makes other statements which shew that it could not have been later than 152^l. We may therefore speak in general terms of this heresy having begun about the middle of the second century. Montanus first made himself known at Ardabau, a village of Mysia, not far from the borders of Phrygia; and from it being embraced by the people of that country, the heresy acquired the name of Phrygian, or Cataphrygian. It is difficult to say of Montanus, who had been lately converted to Christianity, whether in the first instance he was an impostor, or whether he was led away by an over-heated imagination. He appeared subject to trances or ecstasies, and while some took him for a madman, others believed him to be really inspired.

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ⁱ Baratier *de Success.* p. 147.

^k Chron. Hist. Eccl. IV. 27.

^l Apollonius wrote against it in the reign of Commodus, and said that it was forty years since it began. Commodus died in 192. (H. E. V. 18.) Eusebius quotes another writer, (V. 16.) who states that Montanus began his heresy when Gratus was proconsul of Asia: and it

has been said (though it seems doubtful) that Gratus was consul in the fourth year of Antoninus Pius, 141 or 142. Epiphanius says that Montanism took its rise in the 19th year of Antoninus. (Hær. XLVIII. 1. p. 402.) See Longerue *de Tempore quo nata est Hæresis Montani*. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 3. p. 119.

A. D. 168. He also persuaded Prisca, or Priscilla, and Maximilla, two ladies of rank, to leave their husbands and follow him; and they all three substantiated their claim to inspiration by uttering prophecies. This part of their history might lead us into the inquiry, whether the miraculous gifts of the Spirit still continued in the church: and it is unquestionable, that the persons who wrote against Montanus did not deny his prophetical powers, on the ground of such a faculty being no longer exercised. Justin Martyr, who is generally said to have written before the time of Montanus, asserts that men and women in his day received the gifts of the Spiritⁿ; and in another place, where he states the same fact^o, he adds that there were also many impostors, who falsely pretended to prophecy. We have seen that some such pretensions were made by the followers of Basilides^p. The names of Quadratus the Athenian, whom I have already mentioned, and Ammia of Philadelphia, are specified as of persons who were known to possess this gift^q: Melito, bishop of Sardes, appears to have been known by the name of the Prophet, from his possessing it in a preeminent degree^r: and if Montanus and his followers had been more moderate in their pretensions, they would perhaps have met with little opposition^s. The women committed themselves by too much minuteness

ⁿ Dial. cum Tryph. 39. p. 136.

^o Ib. 82. p. 179.

^p Page 63.

^q Anonymus apud Eus. V.

17.

^r Hieron. *Catal. Script.* See

Valesius ad Eus. *H. E.* IV. 26. et V. 24.

^s For the continuance of this gift see Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.* II. 4. p. 96. *Diss. Cypr.* IV. 1. Wernsdorff *de Montan.* p. 3.

in their predictions; and when they were not confirmed by the event, the imposture was considered as demonstrated. The notion which prevailed for some time, that the Roman empire was soon coming to an end, appears to have taken its rise from the prophets of this sect.

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Montanus himself, if he did not begin with being an enthusiast, soon became one. He carried the principle of mortification to a great length. He enjoined several periods of fasting, prohibited second marriages^t, and even recommended husbands and wives to separate^u. To obtain safety by flight in the time of persecution was pronounced unlawful; though the opponents of this sect insinuated that it had furnished very few cases of martyrdom. The heavier and more atrocious sins, such as apostasy, murder, and adultery, were considered to be irremissible; and no penitence could entitle such delinquents to be restored to the communion of the church. The Montanists have been charged with treating all offences with similar severity: but the notion is probably unfounded; and some of their opponents went quite as far in withholding all forgiveness from apostates or murderers^x. The mystical fancies of Montanus may be seen by his giving the name of Jerusalem to two small places in Phrygia, and his ordering all persons to congregate

^t There is evidence that they were held unlawful by Christians who were not suspected of heresy. Athenagoras speaks of a second marriage as "a specious adultery." *Legat.* c. 33. See Hartmannus *de Rebus gestis Christianorum sub Apostolis*, c. XIII. p. 342. Wernsdorff *de*

Montan. §. XXVIII. p. 81, 84.

^u This is the common notion concerning Montanus, but the truth of it is denied by Wernsdorff, *de Montan.* §. XXIX. p. 87.

^x Wernsdorff, *l. c.* §. XXX. p. 90.

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there : but the arrogance of his pretensions became most notorious by his giving himself out as the Paraclete. It seems certain that those persons have misrepresented his meaning, who understand by this that he identified himself with the Holy Ghost ; and it is most probable that he spoke of his own inspiration as a supplement to that of the Apostles, proceeding from the same Holy Spirit, but vouchsafed in fuller measure^s.

His followers at first were few, though he employed regular teachers, and paid them for disseminating his doctrines ; a custom which exposed him to no small censure ; and he was accused of supplying himself with money by taking presents from his converts, even when they were extremely poor. Several meetings were held in different parts of Asia Minor, where the subject of his pretensions was discussed, and they were unanimously treated as unfounded. The supporters of them were forbidden to hold communion with the church : and as a matter of doctrine, there can be no doubt that Montanism was from the very first considered as an heresy. It has however often been the case, that tenets, which have been condemned by councils and by the heads of the church, have become popular with a certain class, and maintained their ground in spite of opposition. It was so with the doctrines of Montanus. We read of their causing a great sensation in the neighbouring church of Pontus : and when Zoticus and Julianus, the bishops of Comana and Apamea, were anxious to put Maximilla's inspiration to the test, they were not able to proceed.

^s See Wernsdorff *de Montan.* §. XI. p. 32. §. XIII. p. 38.

A person named Themison^z set the two bishops at defiance; and the censures of the church appear to have been the only punishment which the prophetess or her master received. Their end however is said to have been most melancholy. According to one account, Montanus and Maximilla hanged themselves^a; and Theodotus, another of his followers, was destroyed by the effect of one of his pretended ecstasies: but the writer, who has preserved these stories, does not vouch for their being authentic.

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Several writers employed themselves in proving the imposture of Montanism. One of them was Apollinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, whom I have already mentioned as presenting an Apology to the emperor^b. Later in the century we find Miltiades publishing against them, as well as against the heathen and the Jews. Apollonius, bishop of Ephesus, Serapion, bishop of Antioch, and Caius, a presbyter of the Roman church, undertook the same task. It is even said that Soter, the bishop of Rome, published a work against them^c: and Eusebius has preserved some fragments of an anonymous writer, which throw great light upon the early history of this sect. It does not however appear that Montanus was considered heretical in the fundamental articles of our faith; and his followers did not think that they ceased to be Christians, when

^z He had been a confessor during some persecution, and the Montanists were very proud of his accession to their party. Eus. *H. E.* V. 18.

Mémoires, tom. II. part. 3. p. 45.

^b He was the author of several other works mentioned by Eusebius, IV. 27.

^c Prædestinatus, *Har.* 26.

^a Tillemont says that they lived to the reign of Caracalla.

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they became Montanists^d. In the article of the Trinity their belief was perfectly sound, though Theodoret^e and Jerom^f have charged them with inclining to Sabellianism. This may have been the case with some of them in later times : and we are told that one party, of which Æschines was the head, maintained a creed which resembled that of Sabellius, while the remainder, under the direction of Proculus, continued orthodox^g. The countries bordering upon Phrygia were most remarkable for maintaining this heresy : and the Montanists under the name of Priscilliani, Pepuziani, &c. held their ground for some centuries. Calumnies were spread against them in the fourth and fifth centuries, as if they practised some horrid and mysterious cruelties in their religious meetings^h. The same was said of nearly all the Gnostics : but there is little reason to think that these stories had any foundation in truth, as far as regarded the Montanistsⁱ.

In certain points they resembled the Encratites, a sect which rose into notice about the year 172, though its characteristic doctrines had been practised by a certain party through the whole of the

^d See Wernsdorff *de Montanistis*, §. XXXVIII. p. 120. This work, which I have often quoted, contains the fullest account of the opinions and practice of the Montanists, though he is perhaps too anxious to justify them. I would also refer to Ittigius *de Hæresiarchis*, II. 13, p. 219.

^e Hær. Fab. III. 2. p. 227.

^f Epist. XLI. 4. vol. I. p. 187. Socrates seems to say

the same, *H. E.* I. 23.

^g Pseudo-Tertull. *de Præscript.* c. 52.

^h Augstin. *de Hær.* XXVI. XXVII. Philastr. *Hær.* XLIX. Epiphani. *Hær.* XLVIII. 14.

ⁱ They seem not to have been believed by Jerom, *Epist.* XLI. 4. Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* III. 2. See Kortholt. *de Calumniis Pagan.* c. XVIII. 7. Wernsdorff *de Montan.* c. XVI. p. 49.

century. I have mentioned that Tatian left Rome after the death of Justin Martyr, in 165, and it seems too certain that he was partly seduced by the advocates of Gnosticism. The rigid austerity which he practised had perhaps been losing ground; and if he had only revived it, he might still have been considered orthodox, though he carried his principles farther than was necessary. We are told, however, that he believed the Law to belong to one God, and the Gospel to another^k; in which notion we cannot fail to recognise the philosophy of Marcion: and if more evidence was wanting, we have it in the fact of Julius Cassianus, a disciple of Valentinus, writing a work in support of Tatian's doctrines. Tatian however acquired celebrity from his practical rather than his speculative opinions. He condemned marriage, and the use of animal food and wine: and the strict continence which he enjoined upon his followers, obtained for them the name of Encratites. The same principles were espoused shortly after by Severus, from whom the sect received the additional name of Severiani^l, and they became so decidedly heretical that they rejected the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul. Tatian was also charged with taking great liberties with the words of Scripture, in a Harmony which he published of the four Gospels. He omitted the genealogical descent of Christ from David, which seems to shew, that he agreed with the Gnostics in rejecting the incarnation of Jesus: and though a work of this kind, executed in the second century, would be extremely curious, we

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^k Clem. Alex. *Strom.* III. 12. p. 548.

^l Eus. IV. 29.

A. D. 168. should perhaps find, if it had survived^m, that Tatian endeavoured to bend the Gospels to his own peculiar views. Eusebius mentions a writer named Musanus, who published against the Encratites; and we know that they were opposed by Apollinarius, Irenæus, Clement, Origen, and others.

A. D. 169. I may now return to the chronological order of events, and the personal history of the emperors, so far as the Christians were affected by it. In the year 169 the two emperors left Rome to make war against the Marcomanni, and several German tribes, which were becoming formidable by their inroads upon the Roman provinces. A biographerⁿ of M. Aurelius represents the alarm which these barbarians excited as extremely great; and the religious, as well as military, preparations were pursued with much activity. Unusual care was taken to ensure the favour of Heaven; and since the priests were specially consulted, and the city was purified by every means which religion suggested, there is reason to fear that the season was one of severe trial to the Christians. After a considerable delay the army set forward: but all these religious precautions were ineffectual in behalf of one of the emperors. L. Verus died in the month of December at Altinum, not far from Venice; and M. Aurelius returned to Rome with his remains. He continued there some time before he resumed his expedition: and again we read of his being very diligent in restoring the worship of the Gods. Such acts of superstition were called

^m Concerning a work which has been supposed to be Tatian's Harmony, see Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sæc. II. Select. cap. I. 15. p. 17.*

ⁿ Jul. Capitol. 21.

forth not only for the safety of the army, but on account of the pestilence, which I have already mentioned, and which was still raging with great violence. An extraordinary rising of the Tiber in the preceding year had destroyed many buildings, among which were probably the public granaries, for we are told that a very severe famine was the consequence; and these united visitations were the cause of the surviving emperor staying some time at Rome in the beginning of the year 170. I also notice them, because Tertullian^a seems specially to allude to this period, when he says that every public suffering or misfortune was attributed to the Christians. If the Tiber rose up to the walls, if the Nile did not overflow its banks, if there was no rain, if there was an earthquake, a famine, or a pestilence, immediately, as this writer complains, there was a cry that the Christians should be thrown to the lions: and whether Tertullian alluded to the present occasion or no, there can be little doubt that this barbarous demand was often gratified, while M. Aurelius was preparing for his second expedition to Germany. He also took this opportunity of celebrating the fifth anniversary of his son Commodus being admitted to the title of Cæsar: and such occasions always gave a license to the popular feeling against the Christians.

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In this same year 170 he set out once more to carry on the war in Germany: and since his campaigns kept him from Rome for several years, we may acquit him for the present of causing any molesta-

^a Apol. 40. Origen. in Matt. c. XXIV. tract. 28. p. 857. Arnobius, I. p. 8, 9. See Kortholt *de vita et moribus Christianis*, &c. c. XV. *de Calumn. Pagan.* c. XXII.

A. D. 170. tion to the Christians of that city. If the chronology of Eusebius is correct, we have evidence that during some part of the time that Soter was bishop of Rome, the Gospel was not so much persecuted there as in other parts of the world. Eusebius makes Soter to have been bishop from 168 to 173; and we have seen, that during his three first years he was likely to see his flock exposed to considerable suffering. We are told however that he found time to address a letter of admonition and advice to the church of Corinth^p, of which Dionysius was then bishop: and we learn from the reply which Dionysius wrote to him, that this friendly intercourse between distant churches was kept up with the most beneficial effect. The letter from Rome had been read publicly at Corinth in the church on Sunday, and was preserved, that the reading of it might be repeated: and this leads Dionysius to mention what perhaps was well known in both places, that the letter which Clement had written to the Corinthians so many years before, was still publicly read in their congregations. But the most interesting fact in the letter of Dionysius is, that the Christians of Rome had distinguished themselves from the earliest times by sending relief to their brethren in different countries. He mentions particularly, that they supported the Christians, who were sentenced to work in the mines: and Soter is praised for having carried this liberality even farther than his predecessors. It is probable, as I have already observed, that he directed this work of charity during the latter years

^p EUS. *H. E.* II. 25. IV. 23.

of his presiding over the Roman church: during which time the Christians in some other countries, perhaps in Greece, were suffering from persecution: and a late writer^q has asserted that Dionysius himself suffered martyrdom. There is other evidence, that the Christians of one country were in the habit of relieving their brethren in another. Such at least was the opinion entertained of them by the heathen: and Lucian must have heard much of this charitable disposition of the Christians, when he spoke of Peregrinus, who was thrown into prison in Palestine, receiving pecuniary aid from the Christians of Asia Minor^r. The death of Peregrinus happened about the year 165: and though the story of his being converted to Christianity was perhaps invented by Lucian, it is plain that this writer had observed the habits of the Christians, and that he knew them to be remarkable for liberality to their brethren who were in need. The custom of money being contributed for the purposes of charity had continued from the apostolical times: and in the second century the bishops had power to order extraordinary collections for any special occasion^s. If Christians had been shipwrecked, if they had been banished to the islands, condemned to work in the mines, or thrown into prison, relief was afforded from the common funds of the church^t: and the distribution of the money, which was collected for charity, appears to have rested with the bishop^u. According to Eusebius, Soter was removed by death

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^q Cedrenus, *Compend. Hist.* p. 198. ed. 1729.

^t Tertull. *Apol.* 39.

^u Cypr. *Epist.* 36. Justin. *Mart. Apol.* I. 67. p. 83, 84.

^s Tertull. *de Jejuniis*. 13.

A. D. 173. in the year 173, when he was succeeded by Eleutherus : and we have positive evidence that during the bishopric of the latter there were great persecutions in different parts of the world.

The history of these persecutions would lead us to consider the state of Christianity in Gaul : but I ought first to notice a story, which if it could be received as authentic, would rather incline us to expect that the Christians were protected from all molestation by the emperor himself. I allude to the miraculous shower of rain, which is said to have been obtained by the prayers of the Christian soldiers, when the emperor and his army were suffering from heat and drought in a war against the Quadi. The event is placed in the year 174 : and it can hardly be doubted that the army was exposed to some such suffering, and that seasonable relief was obtained by a sudden shower of rain. This is related as a matter of fact by heathen historians : and Christian writers have added, that one legion obtained the name of *the thundering legion*, because the Christian soldiers, of which it was composed, knelt down in the presence of the enemy, which was followed not only by a seasonable supply of rain, but by a storm of thunder and hail, to the great discomfiture of their opponents. It is added, that M. Aurelius acknowledged the miracle in a letter which he wrote in favour of the Christians ; and a letter to this effect is still extant, in which it is ordered, that any person who was brought to trial merely for being a Christian should be acquitted, and his accuser should be burnt to death. It seems now to be generally agreed that this letter is a forgery ; and it has been shewn that one of the

Roman legions was called *the thundering legion* A. D. long before the time of the present emperor^x. It is 174. remarkable, however, that Eusebius quotes Apollinarius, a contemporary writer, as saying, that the name was given to it on account of the miracle; which at least shews that the shower of rain was ascribed to the prayers of the Christians at the time when the event is said to have happened. Tertullian also, who was born some years before, asserts it as a well known fact in more than one passage of his writings^y; and he refers to a letter of M. Aurelius upon the subject, which seems to have agreed with that which is now rejected as a forgery.

We are therefore justified in saying, that the Christians of that day ascribed the shower of rain to the prayers of the Christian soldiers: and the only question for discussion is whether they were correct in so ascribing it. Heathen writers supposed it to be obtained by the prayers of the emperor^z, or by means of a magician who accompanied the army^a; which greatly confirms the notion of there being something extraordinary in the event itself. Perhaps we are not obliged to have recourse to a miracle at all, at least not to a miracle in the ordinary acceptation of the term, or beyond what is experienced in every case of successful prayer. If the army had been suffering for some days from thirst, (of which there can hardly

^x Witsius *de Legione Fulminatrice*, annexed to his *Ægyptiaca*. Laroque *de Legione Fulminatrice*, subjoined to the *Adversaria Sacr.* of M. Laroque. Jablonski in vol. VIII. of

Miscell. Lipsiens. p. 417.

^y Apol. 6. ad Scap. 4.

^z Jul. Capitol. *M. Aur.* 24. Themist. Or. 15.

^a Dio, LXXI. 8. p. 1183. Suid. v. *Julian*.

A. D. 174. be a doubt,) and if any of the soldiers were Christians, it is impossible to suppose that they would not address themselves to God in prayer: when the rain came down, (and that it came suddenly seems another undoubted fact,) the Christians would return thanks to the same God whom they had lately addressed in prayer. There was no more superstition in their having acted thus, than there is credulity in our believing them to have done so: and the whole affair may perhaps be explained in this simple way^b.

The letter, which is said to have been written by M. Aurelius in favour of the Christians, might cause a little more difficulty; and the evidence of Tertullian would incline us to infer, that some such letter was actually written. The one, which is now extant, was perhaps forged so as to agree with the expressions used by Tertullian: and we are obliged to conclude, that upon this, as upon former occasions, the intentions of the emperor were frustrated. We have seen that provincial magistrates found means to molest the Christians, and even to put them to death, though edicts of successive emperors had protected them from such attacks; and the present letter, if it ever existed, was attended with similar results. The emperor indeed had little time to attend to the execution of his orders, if he ever issued them. His victory over the Quadi was gained, as I have stated, in the year 174; and he

^b The story is discussed at some length by Le Clerc, *Hist. Eccl.* an. 174. Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const.* Cent. II. c. 17. Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sæc. II.*

Sel. cap. VI. 28. p. 293. Many writers are mentioned by Fabricius, *Lux. Salut. Évang.* p. 139.

was employed for some time in following up his conquests. In the next year an insurrection broke out in Syria, which was headed by Avidius Cassius. The emperor immediately returned into Italy, and, without entering Rome, proceeded to Campania, intending to march in person against the rebels. His presence however was rendered unnecessary by the defeat of Cassius, who had borne his imperial title only three months and six days, and his head was brought to the emperor while he was in Campania. Even after this success he declined visiting his capital; and taking with him his son Commodus, who was now fourteen years old, he set out for the East. When he arrived at the scene of the late insurrection, he exhibited great clemency, and refused to punish any of the persons who had joined Avidius Cassius. This at least was his intention before he quitted Italy^c: but it is probable that some inquiry was made into the matter, since Tertullian states it as a well known fact, that no Christian had joined the party of Cassius^d. There is reason to think that the Jews were not so loyal^e. The late rebellion had broken out in the neighbourhood of Judæa; and the usual turbulence of that people appears to have shewn itself, since the emperor is said to have observed, as he passed through their country, that he had at length met with people who were worse than the Marcomanni and the Quadi^f. If the statement of Tertullian was correct, the emperor would be likely to except the Christians from this reproach; and the fidelity of

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^c Vulcat. Gallic. in *Cass.* 11.

^d Apol. 35.

^e Dio, LXXI. 25. p. 1191.

^f Ammian. Marcell. XXII. 5.

A. D. 177. the Christians on the late occasion would be another reason for his interfering in their favour. What-ever inclination he may have shewn of this kind, his subjects were not much disposed to obey his injunctions : and the year 177 presents the account of a persecution in Gaul, which equalled in severity any of which we yet have read.

LECTURE XX.

THE year 177 was distinguished by severe persecutions, not only in the south of Gaul, but in various parts of the world^a. If we could be certain, that the work of Athenagoras entitled *An Embassy in behalf of the Christians* was presented to the emperor in the present year, and that the writer of it was president of the catechetical school in Alexandria^b, we might perhaps infer, that the Christians in that city were now suffering from their enemies. These however must be considered doubtful points: and the persecution in the south of France is entitled to the first consideration in the events of this period. The churches of Vienne and Lyons addressed a letter to the Christians of Asia Minor, containing a detailed account of their own sufferings; and this letter supplies one proof among many, that a close and friendly intercourse was kept up between the Christians in Asia and in Gaul. The origin of this intercourse, and the date of its first commencement, are not authentically stated. The names of some persons have been preserved, who are said to have been sent into Gaul by Polycarp, and to have suffered martyrdom

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^a For the date of the persecution in Gaul, see Mosheim, *Observ. Sacr. et Hist.* c. III. §. 10. p. 172. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 398.

^b See p. 136.

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there^c. Irenæus himself is said by a late writer^d to have been sent into Gaul by Polycarp: and we know, from his own words, that in his younger days he had seen that venerable and apostolical bishop in Asia. It is not improbable that, when Polycarp came to Rome, about the year 158, some of his companions may have continued their journey westward, and visited Gaul: or, if we were seeking a reason for Christians leaving their homes in Asia Minor, and settling in such a distant country, we might find it in the continued persecutions, which perhaps drove many persons to seek an asylum in safer quarters. We have positive evidence, that some of the most distinguished Christians in Vienne and Lyons were Asiatic Greeks. Pothinus, the bishop of Lyons at the time of this persecution, was undoubtedly a Greek; and some traditions have represented him as sent into Gaul by Polycarp, or even by St. John. His successor, Irenæus, wrote his works in the Greek language, and he speaks of not understanding the Celtic, which was still spoken by some persons in his diocese. The names of several of the martyrs are Greek: Attalus of Pergamus is expressly mentioned; and Alexander, a Phrygian, is not only said to have been many years in Gaul, but the remarkable circumstance is added, that he possessed a portion of the apostolical spiritual gifts. This would perhaps confirm the notion of his having seen Polycarp, or some such person, who had conversed with the apostles. It has been shewn that the liturgies, which

^c Baronius, ad an. 169. num. XX. ad an. 205. num. XXVII. (He refers to Martyrol. Rom. Septemb. 24. et Novemb. 1.)

Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 3. 207.

^d Greg. Turon. *Hist. Franc.* I. 27.

were used by the Gallic churches before the time of Charlemagne, did not resemble the Roman liturgy, but were much more like to that which was used in the churches of Asia Minor^e, which is another proof of a religious intercourse having taking place between the two countries.

Upon the whole we may safely conclude, that, about the middle of the second century, some Christians of Asia Minor left their own country and settled in Gaul: but we must not suppose that the Gospel was then carried for the first time into the latter country^f. I have already noticed the traditions, which speak of St. Paul and his companions having founded churches in the south of France: and although such stories are to be received with the greatest caution, if not with incredulity, it is difficult to believe that Christianity did not find its way into the Romanized cities of that country some years before the end of the first century. The martyrologies mention bishops of Vienne as early as in the reign of Trajan; and Verus, a disciple of the Apostles, is said to have held that office till the time of Pius, bishop of Rome^g. It has also been said, but apparently with little evidence, that the Gospel was preached at Bourges, in the middle of the second century, by Ursinus^h. Whatever we may think of

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^e Palmer, *Origines Liturgicæ*, §. IX.

^f See G. Liron, *Singularités Historiques et Littéraires*, vol. IV.

^g Baronius did not notice the inconsistency of saying that Crescens and Zacharias, successively bishops of Vienne, were martyred in the reign of

Trajan; (ad an. 118, num. VII.) and that Verus, who lived till the time of Pius, was the *first* bishop of Vienne. (ad an. 166. num. IV.) For the succession of the bishops of Vienne, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 453.

^h Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 1046.

A. D. 177. these traditions, the two cities of Lyons and Vienne had undoubtedly a church, with the regular establishment of a bishop and presbyters, in the year 177: and we may infer from the rage and violence of the persecutors, that the persons interested in the preservation of heathenism were aware of the great progress which the new religion was making.

The storm seems to have been gathering for some time. In the neighbouring cities of Lyons and Vienne the feelings of the people gradually rose to a state of ungovernable ferocity. At first the Christians were forbidden to frequent the public baths and markets, or even to shew themselves. Some of them were then put into prison, to be confined there till the arrival of the governor of the provinceⁱ. An exhibition of games brought him shortly to Lyons, and he seems to have seconded the people to the utmost of their wishes. He confined himself to the simple question, whether the persons brought before him were Christians; and as many as confessed it, were immediately ordered to execution. Some few, to the number of about ten, had not courage to avow their faith; and it is interesting to read the expressions of sorrow which these cases called forth: but before the persecution was over, even these persons

ⁱ His title was probably *Legatus Cæsaris*, and some persons have thought that the office was now held by Sept. Severus, who was afterwards emperor: (Valesius ad Eus. H. E. V. 1. Balduinus, *Comm. ad Edict. Vet. Princ.* p. 97.) but though Spartian says of him, “Deinde provinciam Lugdunensem legatus accepit,” he adds that he married his wife Julia while he held that station,

“ex qua statim pater factus est.” We know that Caracalla was born at Lyons in 188, which was eleven years after the persecution at Lyons. Pagi however has shewn that Spartian was mistaken, and that Severus had been married to Julia before the year 176. (ad Baron. an. 199.) We shall also see in the next Lecture that Severus had a Christian nurse for his son.

recovered their firmness, and bore their tortures like the rest. The punishments, to which they were exposed, were of the most barbarous kind. The most popular mode of destroying them was by wild beasts in the amphitheatre: and in the case of a woman named Blandina, it is expressly said that they refused to touch her. There were other women, and even children, whose superhuman fortitude drove the heathen almost to madness; but their rage was chiefly vented against Pothinus, the bishop of the city, a venerable old man, upwards of ninety years of age^k, who was dragged to the tribunal, and after making his confession in the midst of outrages and insults, was thrown into prison. After lying there two days, he died: and the number of prisoners became so great, that the governor wrote to the emperor to know how they were to be treated. M. Aurelius was now at Rome. He had returned in the preceding year from the east, and in the present year he celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of his receiving the proconsular power. The empire being now undisturbed by external wars^l, the solemnity was likely to be kept with more than usual rejoicings. The victories in Germany and the defeat of Cassius in the east were still recent events: and it is not improbable that the same cause extended to Lyons, and led an extraordinary concourse of people to attend the games in the amphitheatre. However this may be, the emperor sent back an answer, which

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^k He was therefore born not later than the year 87, and may have been thirteen years old at the time of the death of St. John.

^l Mosheim places now the *Legatio* of Athenagoras. See

Lect. XVIII. page 136, and Le Moyne, *Var. Sacr.* vol. II. p. 169. Bayle, *Diction.* art. *Athenag.* Tentzelius, *Exerc. Select.* V. 33. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 556.

A. D. 177. was very unfavourable to the Christians. If he had felt any obligation to them for the success of their prayers three years before, it was entirely forgotten: or he had perhaps listened to the calumnies which were now propagated more actively than ever against the moral conduct of the Christians. Some heathen servants had been spreading these reports against their masters at Lyons; and the governor may perhaps have mentioned this in his letter to the emperor.

When the answer arrived, it ordered that all who confessed themselves to be Christians, should be put to the torture; and that those who denied it, should be acquitted: and since even those who at first shrunk back, were now foremost to face the danger, the work of cruelty was revived with increased activity. Those who were citizens of Rome had the distinction of being beheaded: the rest were exposed to wild beasts: and nothing can shew the fury of these barbarians more strongly, than that they carefully watched the mangled remains of the martyrs, and at length threw them into the Rhone, that they might not receive interment.

The Christians appear to have sent some of their body to Rome at the same time that the governor wrote for orders concerning his prisoners^m. The calmness of these men during that period of fearful suspense is almost incredible. News had reached them of the sensation which was excited in Phrygia and the adjoining countries by the pretensions of Montanus and his followers: and though they were expecting almost daily to receive their crown of martyrdom, they felt anxious for the spiritual wel-

^m Eus. *H. E.* V. 3, 4.

fare of their brethren in Asia, and delivered their opinion by letter upon this new subject of controversy. This confirms what was said before of the connexion between the Asiatic and Gallic churches: and the bearers of these letters are not to be charged with cowardice, if they sought in their former country a protection from the fury of their enemies. A letter was also sent at the same time to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome: and we learn from a fragment of it, that it was carried by Irenæus, who was then a presbyter in the church of Lyons. . It is stated to have contained an exhortation to peace, though the particular cause for such an exhortation is not mentioned. There is no evidence that the heresy of Montanus had as yet made any progress in Rome: or else we might conceive the Christians in Gaul to be much distressed at the dissensions which it was causing in Asia Minorⁿ. The dispute about the Paschal festival would furnish a more probable cause for this pacific interference; and such a question was likely to interest the Asiatic Christians who had settled at Lyons. We know also, that the Gnostic tenets were still popular in Rome: and since the name of Eleutherus is connected with that of the two great leaders of Gnosticism, we may resume in this place the consideration of their history.

I have said little concerning Marcion and Valentinus since the year 140, when both of them had come to Rome. We are not informed whether they continued to reside there, or whether they spread their doctrines in other countries. We have seen

ⁿ See Wernsdorff *de Montanistis*, §. XXXVIII. p. 123. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom II. part. 3. p. 124. tom. III. part. 1. p. 137.

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that Polycarp brought back to the church some of their followers, when he came to Rome in 158 : but their principle of not refusing to swear by the heathen gods protected them from persecution ; and while the ranks of the Christians were thinned by these continued cruelties, the more complying Gnostics were likely to have their numbers increased. Tertullian informs us, that Marcion and Valentinus continued to the time of Eleutherus^o, and they seem to have fixed their principal residence in Rome : but there is some reason to think that this statement is incorrect with respect to Valentinus, and that he did not live beyond the time of Anicetus^p. After what we have heard of the wild and pernicious doctrines of these heretics, it seems extraordinary that they should ever have asked to be restored to the communion of the church. Tertullian however could hardly have been mistaken in a matter of public notoriety, which happened in his own day ; and he speaks of both of them being ejected from the church more than once. The fact of their having been readmitted into it is perhaps a proof that the orthodox party was inclined to conciliation : but the seeds of heresy were too deeply sown, and nothing but complete extirpation could save the rest of the church from danger. Marcion appears upon one of his readmissions to have contributed a large sum of money : from which we may infer that there was still a public fund, as in the early days of the Gospel ; and what we have seen of the Roman church sending assistance to their persecuted brethren abroad, may be explained by this custom of private individuals

^o De Præscript. 30.

^p See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 502.

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subscribing to a common stock. It is highly honourable to the church of which Eleutherus was the head, that when at length he was obliged to prohibit Marcion from holding communion with his flock, the money which had been contributed was returned. Marcion and Valentinus continued henceforth in a state of separation from the church. Marcion made another overture to be readmitted, and again the church was willing to receive him. The condition was imposed, that he should bring back with him those persons who had embraced his heresy: but if he was sincere in intending to do so, he was prevented by death from so far atoning for the mischief which he had caused.

We are not informed whether these transactions happened before the arrival of Irenæus in Rome^q. I have said that he was the bearer of a letter to Eleutherus from the church of Lyons; and it was Eleutherus who finally ejected Marcion, if not Valentinus also. It is not improbable that Irenæus met one or both of these heretics in Rome; and his great work, which he wrote afterwards against the Gnostics, was directed principally against the errors of Valentinus. He may also during the same visit have met with Florinus, who had once been a presbyter in the Roman church, but had been ejected for heresy. Irenæus had known him many years before in Asia Minor, where he lived in the very first society, though he was then a Christian, and received instruction, like himself, from the mouth of Polycarp. He afterwards went to Rome, where he was

^q Valesius supposed that Irenæus did not go to Rome; but the notion is contrary to all

evidence. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. I. p. 450.

A D. led to embrace the tenets of Valentinus. In one
 177. respect he differed from that heretic, and taught that God was the author of evil; a doctrine, which it was the great object of Gnosticism to guard against: but his errors were the consequence of the same fruitless inquiry into the origin of evil, and there is no doubt that in many of his opinions he resembled Valentinus. We learn the principal facts in his history from a letter which was afterwards written to him by Irenæus^r, in which he endeavoured to restore him by calling to his memory the instructions of Polycarp: he also refuted his notions in a special treatise concerning the eight first Æons or Emanations of the Valentinian philosophy; and it is a pleasing tradition, which is preserved by a later writer^s, that the great work of Irenæus against the Gnostics was called forth by his sorrow for the heresy of his friend Florinus.

Another member of the Roman church, whose errors exercised the pen of Irenæus, was Blastus, who seems to have studied in the same pernicious school with Florinus^t. It is probable that he also came with him from Asia, since he is known to have sided with the Asiatic Christians in their mode of observing the Paschal festival^u; and he may perhaps in his younger days have been personally known to Irenæus. He was suspected of inclining to Judaism in other matters beside the Paschal festival, and Irenæus wrote him a letter upon the subject of schism. The journey of Irenæus

^r Apud Eus. *H. E.* V. 20. *Iren.* VI. 1. p. 415.

^s Theodoret, *Hær. Fab.* I. 23.

^u Pseudo-Tertull. *de Præscript.* 53.

^t Concerning these two heretics see Dodwell, *Diss. ad*

to Rome took place about the year 177; and I should infer, that he found the Christians of that city exposed to much danger by the spread of the Gnostic doctrines. These were now maintained by many disciples of Valentinus and Marcion. I have incidentally mentioned some of their names, and they may be found in the works which treat specially of the Gnostics: but since their philosophical schemes were merely variations of those of their masters, and generally marked with still greater absurdities, there is no occasion to mention them in detail. Some notice ought perhaps to be taken of the Ophiani, who had their name from the custom of paying particular honour to the serpent. They seem to have connected this notion with the scriptural fact of the knowledge of good and evil being imparted by the subtlety of the serpent: and their creed probably contained a great mixture of mysticism and absurdity. Some of their ideas resembled those of the Gnostics, and their origin may be traced to the same pernicious school: but they differed from them in treating the name of Jesus with contempt: and though the enemies of the Christians chose sometimes to confound them with the Ophiani, the latter appear to have borrowed little or nothing from the Gospel. They were certainly in being in the second century, but their tenets were not very widely diffused, and were perhaps lost in the more attractive systems of Marcion and Valentinus^x. There is evidence that

A. D.
177.

^x Beside the references concerning the Ophiani in my Bampton Lectures, note 66, I would mention Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sæc. II. Scil. cap. VII.*

11. p. 308. Hartmann. *de Rebus gestis Christianorum sub Apostolis*, c. 22. p. 543. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 220.

A. D. 177. Rome was not the only place where these celebrated teachers of Gnosticism had made converts. Both of them propagated their doctrines in the East, before they visited Europe: and one man, who partly embraced the errors of Valentinus, acquired so much celebrity at the period which we are now considering, that it is necessary to say a few words concerning him.

This man was Bardesanes, a native of Edessa in Mesopotamia, where he lived for some time in great favour with Abgarus^y, the king of that country. I have mentioned in a former Lecture^z, that Christianity was introduced into Edessa at a very early period, and Bardesanes was perhaps brought up in that belief. His writings in defence of it became very celebrated, and he attracted the notice of Apollonius, whose reputation stood so high among the Stoic philosophers, that M. Aurelius attended his school even after he was emperor. It is known that Apollonius accompanied L. Verus when he went into the East in 161, and it is probable therefore that he met with Bardesanes while he was in that country. This may also assist us in fixing the date of Bardesanes; and we may judge of the reputation which he enjoyed, when we read of Apollonius using every persuasion to make him give up Christianity^a. Bardesanes shewed great firmness, as well as courage, in defending his religious belief;

^y Abgarus Bar Menu, supposed to have been a Christian, who reigned from 152 to 187. See Bayer. *Hist. Edess. c numis illustrata*, III. p. 173. Asseman, *Biblioth. Orient.* vol. I. p. 423. Dodwell contends,

that Bardesanes flourished in the reign of Elagabalus. *Diss. ad Iren.* IV. 35. p. 360.

^z XI. p. 328.

^a Epiphan. *Hær.* LVI. 1. p. 477.

and for some time he was equally zealous in refuting the heresies which were then infecting his countrymen^b. He wrote a work against Marcion, and another, upon the subject of fate, was inscribed to Antoninus: but whether this meant the emperor, or a private friend of that name, has been doubted. It is by no means improbable that he was personally known to the emperor L. Verus, (who was also called Antoninus,) as well as to the philosopher Apollonius, while they were in the East, between the years 161 and 166. It is known that Verus received an embassy during that period from India, and that Bardesanes held a conference with the ambassadors^c: he may therefore at the same time have presented his work to the emperor; or if the character of Verus should make it improbable that he paid any attention to matters of learning or religion, Bardesanes may have requested Apollonius to present his work to M. Aurelius: and to whichever emperor it was addressed, it probably gave him much new information concerning the Gospel. We learn from a fragment of it preserved by Eusebius^d, that Christians were to be found not only among the Egyptians, but among the Persians, the Medes, the Parthians, and the Bactrians; and such testimony is particularly worthy of credit, as coming from a man who lived in Mesopotamia. Unfortunately he did not always continue sound in his opinions. He is generally classed among those per-

A. D.
177.

^b A list of his works is given by Hahn, *Comment. Hist. Theol. de Bardesane*, p. 25, where is the best account of his life. See also Strunzius, *Hist. Bardesan.* c. 18, 19.

^c Porphyr. *de Abstin.* IV. 17. p. 356. *de Styge*, apud A. Schott. *Obs. Hum.* V. 20. p. 229.

^d *Præp. Evang.* VI. 10. p. 273.

A. D.
177.

sons who held the Oriental doctrine of two Principles; and his vicinity to Persia may perhaps have given him a taste for that philosophy. He is said in fact to have joined the Valentinians; and he agreed with them in denying the resurrection of the body, and in believing Jesus to have been an incorporeal phantom. In some points however he differed materially from Valentinus, and perhaps there was no time when he did not call himself a Christian. He acknowledged the whole of the Old and New Testament: in the strictest sense of the term he held the unity of God: he believed that God, who was the Father of Jesus Christ, was the Creator of the world; and he even held that the Word of God, or his Son, cooperated in this creation. In all these points he much more resembled a Christian than a Gnostic: but his speculations upon the origin of matter and of evil led him into some peculiar notions, which have caused him to be classed with the precursors of Manicheism. He taught that the Devil was not created by God, and thus he thought to account for evil without making God the author of it. Some of his errors were abjured by him before he died, though not the whole of them; and he does not appear to have been looked upon as so decidedly heretical as many others of the Gnostic school^e. His son, who was named Harmonius, studied at Athens, and followed in some points the mistaken opinions of his father. Particular mention is made of the hymns which he composed to the memory of the martyrs^f, and Bardesanes was

^e See Strunzius, *Hist. Bardesanis*. Beausobre, *Hist. de*

Manichée, tom. II. p. 128.

^f Theodoret, *H. E.* IV. 29.

himself the author of several hymns in the Syriac language. A. D.
177.

Irenæus had perhaps little personal acquaintance with the Gnostics before he visited Rome, but they made a great impression upon his mind. We have no information as to the time which he passed in that city: and there is no reason for supposing, as is stated by one of his biographers^g, that he went on afterwards to Asia. He probably found the church of Rome in a state of suffering little short of that which he had witnessed at Lyons: and if the emperor acted upon the orders which he sent to his representative in the latter city, there must have been several martyrdoms at Rome in the course of the present year. When Irenæus returned to Lyons, he found the church without its spiritual head. Pothinus had been martyred, as I have stated, in the late persecution; and the work of destruction had been so extensive, that some time would be required before the church could be restored to a state of tranquillity^h. Irenæus was himself the person appointed to succeed Pothinus: and if his other qualifications were equal to his learning, there could not have been a fitter person to preside over the churchⁱ. I have already mentioned some of his

^g Feuardentius. The same is said by Le Sueur, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, ad an. 177.

^h Ruinart has admitted as genuine the Acts of Symphorianus, who is said to have suffered at Autun, a city not far from Lyons. The magistrate acted upon the same edict of M. Aurelius which is noticed in the Acts of Justin Martyr,

that whoever would not sacrifice to the Gods should be punished by torture. For martyrdoms in other places of Gaul see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 275. tom. III. part. 1. p. 63.

ⁱ Some persons have supposed him to have been born in 120, others in 140.

A. D. 177. compositions^k, and it was not long after his appointment to the bishopric, that he began his great work in five books, entitled, *A Refutation of Knowledge falsely so called*. It was intended to expose the whole system of the Gnostics, particularly of Valentinus: and we may judge of the extensive circulation given to these doctrines, when we find, from Irenæus, that some women had embraced them even in the distant country which was watered by the Rhone. It is greatly to be regretted that so valuable a work only exists in an old Latin translation. It appears to have been written in the reign of Commodus^l, and while Eleutherus was bishop of Rome^m; so that we may place its date between the years 180 and 189.

If the personal presence of the emperor had any effect upon the state of the Christians in Rome, it ceased in the year 178, when he set out with his son Commodus for a second war with the Marcomanni. His military operations, which were uniformly successful, kept him absent from Rome during the whole of the following year: and in the spring of 180 he died in Pannonia. There is reason to think that the persecution did not entirely cease during the whole of that period. Theophilus, whom I have mentioned as bishop of Antiochⁿ, wrote his work to Autolycus soon after the death of M. Aurelius, and the sufferings of the Christians

^k For an account of them see Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.* VI. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 152.

^l He mentions Theodotion's version of the Scriptures, which was made in the reign of Com-

modus. (Epiphan. *de Mensur.*) 17. p. 172.)

^m He gives the succession of the bishops of Rome down to Eleutherus, but no further. (III. 3. p. 176.)

ⁿ See page 149.

were not then over. We shall see that they continued at the beginning of the following reign; and before we say any thing of the new emperor, it may be well to consider the character of M. Aurelius, so far as his influence was felt by the professors of the Gospel.

A. D.
180.

I have given reasons for not classing Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, with the persecutors of the church. The Christians suffered in different parts of the empire during all these reigns, but there were no definite persecutions, which could be traced to the edicts of the emperors. Nero and Domitian are always considered to have obtained this disgraceful distinction. Trajan has also been said to have instituted the third persecution, and the fourth has sometimes been ascribed to Hadrian: but other writers have made M. Aurelius the fourth persecutor, so that Antoninus Pius escapes without this obloquy being attached to his name. I have perhaps said enough to shew, that we cannot speak of ten persecutions, according to the common notion^o, nor of any definite number; but the three emperors mentioned above were rather favourable to the Christians by their edicts than otherwise. We can hardly say the same of M. Aurelius, who called himself a philosophical emperor, and who was not without amiable qualities, according to the notions of that day. The mention made by himself, of his having received religious impressions very early from his mother, might give us a favourable idea of both of them. His philosophy, which was of the Stoical

^o This notion, which is mentioned for the first time by Sulpitius Severus in the fourth century, was perhaps taken from Rev. xvii. 12—14.

A. D. 180. school, was perhaps one cause of his despising the Christians. We have seen, that Apollonius, whose lectures were attended by the emperor before and after his accession, was strongly opposed to the new religion. The emperor^p mentions another person, named Diognetus, who had taught him to have no faith in incantations, the exorcising of evil spirits, or any pretended wonders of that kind: and he most probably included the Christians among the numerous impostors of the day. There is reason to think, that the celebrated orator Fronto, from whom the emperor had taken lessons in eloquence, published a work which contained calumnies against the Christians^q: and we may say generally that it was not till the present reign, that the philosophers began to attend with any seriousness to the doctrines of the Christians. M. Aurelius was himself a philosopher: and we may say in his defence, that the increasing demoralization of the people made them more impatient of any restraint in their thirst for Christian blood. The emperor ought to have restrained them; but his edicts rather followed, than led, the wishes of his subjects. We have seen that nearly the whole of his reign was a continued series of persecutions; and he cannot be acquitted of making it more easy for the enemies of the Christians to gratify their malice. He must in many ways have become acquainted with the Christian doctrines: but, like his master Apollonius, he was determined not to listen to them: and his own writings furnish a proof of the prejudice with which he viewed the Christian martyrs. Speaking of the soul being ready to quit

^p I. 6.

^q Minucius Felix, c. 10, et 31.

the body at any time, if required, he says that it ought to be an act of specific deliberation, and not the result of mere obstinacy, as is the case with the Christians^r. On the whole we must say, that the condition of the Christians was much worse at the end of his reign than at the beginning: and the name of M. Aurelius, though conspicuous among philosophers, has also an eminent place among the opponents of the Gospel.

A. D.
180.

L. Aurelius Commodus was nineteen years of age when he was called to the empire by the death of his father in the year 180. His first act was to make treaties with the different German nations, with whom he had been at war: and having effected this in a manner by no means satisfactory to his army, he hastened to Rome. I have stated, that the persecution, which had lasted so long, was not at an end when the late emperor died; and a defence of Christianity, which was written by Miltiades, is generally ascribed to this period^s. The work itself is lost, and we know nothing of the writer, except that he was a rhetorician by profession^t, and published against Montanus, as well as upon other subjects^u. His defence of Christianity seems not to have been addressed to the emperor, but to the magistrates of the country in which he lived: and if the empire was then in the hands of Commodus, the apologist would probably not have met with much attention to his appeal.

It cannot however be denied that the reign of

^r X I. 3.

^s Dodwell places it at the beginning of the reign of M. Aurelius. *Diss. ad Iren.* IV.

38. p. 369.

^t Tertull. *adv. Valentin.* 5.

^u Eus. *II. E.* V. 17.

A. D.
180.

Commodus was less injurious to the Christians than those of his immediate predecessors: and we have to account for the singular phenomenon, that the Christians were persecuted when enlightened and philosophical princes were on the throne, but enjoyed a respite under a man, whose character was a mixture of sensuality and cruelty^x. It is not difficult to explain this apparent paradox. The government of Hadrian or M. Aurelius was comparatively mild; and so long as their subjects did not meddle with affairs of state, they were left very much to themselves: they found an interest or an amusement in persecuting the Christians, and their masters did not interfere with them. But Commodus treated his subjects, as they were disposed to treat the Christians: to put them to death, was his pastime: and while they were expecting the blow to fall upon themselves, they had neither time nor inclination to lay hands upon the Christians. The latter therefore escaped persecution, not because their enemies were less prejudiced or less malicious, but because they were employed in providing for their own security. Another reason may perhaps be found in that part of the character of Commodus which related to religion. The four preceding emperors had professed great attachment to the national belief; and they were perhaps sincere according to their notions, and the light which they possessed: but Commodus did not even keep up the semblance of outward respect to the Gods of his country: the temples were converted by him into scenes of debauchery

^x See Cellarius *de bonorum acerbior in Christianos affectu, alioqui Principum, Trajani, &c.*

and bloodshed^y: and we may judge of the disgust which was raised by such profanations, when we find the senate insulting him after his death, as the enemy of the Gods, and the violator of temples. It was not likely therefore that he would regard any representations which might be made to him concerning the alarming increase of Christianity: and when he proceeded to personate Hercules, and to exact divine honours to himself, he strengthened the arguments of the Christians, who had long been exposing the impieties and absurdities of heathenism. Even M. Aurelius himself had given them an advantage of this kind; and when the senate at his request declared his wife Faustina to be a goddess, and gave to her the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres, we are at a loss whether to wonder most at the blindness of the emperor in not seeing her immoralities, or at the obsequiousness of the senate in giving them such a reward. The emperor however had taken great pains in forming the mind, and correcting the vicious disposition, of his son Commodus: and whatever were the failings of M. Aurelius, he never intended to offer those outrages to religion and morality, which we meet with in the history of his successor.

A. D.
180.

Though such conduct in the head of the empire was degrading to human nature, we may hope, from the causes assigned above, that the condition of the Christians began gradually to amend. Eusebius speaks of the church enjoying peace throughout the world, and of many persons of rank embracing Christianity in the city of Rome^z. This perhaps took

^y Lamprid. 2. 9.

^z H. E. V. 21.

A. D.
183.

place rather later in the reign: but an event happened in the year 183, which turned out favourable to the Christians, though in many points of view the transaction was disgraceful. Commodus had been married to Crispina, in the year before he set out with his father for the German war: and this woman, after she became empress, was convicted of adultery. In the year 183 she was banished to the island of Capreae, and her place was supplied by more than one mistress in the emperor's court. One of them was Marcia, who had lived before with Quadratus, but not as his wife; and when Quadratus was put to death by Commodus, she married Eclectus, who had been his chamberlain; but this did not hinder her from forming the same illicit connexion with the emperor, which she had before carried on with her husband's master. Such a complication of depravity becomes still more extraordinary, when we are told that Marcia was a Christian. The evidence seems unquestionable, that she had been converted to the Gospel; but as too often happens, she allowed her passions to get the better of her principles. The case would be perplexing, if we did not see similar instances, where all the parties profess to be believers: and if any persons object to the Gospel, that it did not restrain this woman from her licentious conduct, we can only complain of the unfairness which looks for different results in the second century from those which are produced in the nineteenth. Marcia appears to have so far retained her belief in Christianity, that she extended her influence to all the professors of it. She was the favourite mistress of Commodus, and received from him almost all the marks of respect

which were given to a wife^a. This enabled her to shew many acts of kindness to the Christians^b: and it is a singular feature in the history of the church, that it was indebted for this first instance of royal favour to the adulterous paramour of an unfeeling and bloodthirsty tyrant.

A. D.
183.

We may naturally suppose that the Roman Christians derived the most advantage from the influence of Marcia: but Eusebius had probably good grounds for saying that the church was now enjoying a season of peace throughout the world. Such seems to have been the case more particularly at Alexandria: and though the Christians of that place had perhaps their share of suffering, no account has been preserved of any resembling those which relate to Rome, and Lyons, and Asia Minor. Alexandria was in one respect the source of great detriment to the Gospel, since many of the professors of Gnosticism had studied in the schools of that city: but the eclectic character, which the Alexandrian philosophy had assumed, was perhaps not unfavourable to the spreading of the Gospel. The Platonists, as I have already stated, had modified some of their doctrines by their acquaintance with the Jewish scriptures; and they were now beginning to perceive, that it was their interest to study the theology of the Christians. This gave rise a few years after to what is commonly called the school of the later Platonists: but there is reason to think that the heathen philosophers of Alexandria were satisfied to dispute with the Christians, without attempting to silence them by force. The Christians were prepared for these

^a Herodian. I. 50.
p. 1206.

^b Dio Cass. i. c. Xiphil. LXXII. 4.

A. D. 183. encounters by having their converts regularly instructed in the elements of their faith : and the catechetical schools of Alexandria deserve particular attention in the early history of the Gospel. The date of their first establishment is not clearly ascertained; though we might form some approximation to it, if we could depend upon a late writer^c, who says that Athenagoras was the first person who presided in the school. I have mentioned Athenagoras as the author of a work in defence of Christianity, which is placed by some writers in 166, and by others in 177 : so that the catechetical school might be thought to have come into existence about the middle of the second century. On the other hand it is said by Jerom^d that there had always been ecclesiastical teachers there from the time of St. Mark, the first bishop of Alexandria : and I should be inclined to conclude that the converts to Christianity, adults as well as children, had the benefit of a more systematic mode of teaching in that city than in other places. It is probable that for some time the doctrines of the Gospel were the only subjects taught in these schools : but it seems certain, that, toward the end of the second century, the same persons who taught the Christian converts, delivered lectures upon many branches of knowledge. Athenagoras may have been the first, who conducted the school upon this extended principle ; and at the beginning of the reign of Commodus we find the education of the converts in the hands of a man, who might be almost said to unite the two characters of a philo-

^c Philippus Sidetes, apud Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.*

^d Catal. Script. c. 36.

sopher and an apostle. This man was Pantænus, A. D.
183. who is said by a late writer^c to have been taught by persons who had seen the Apostles. I shall speak hereafter of his missionary journey to India; but at present we are to consider him in the singular light of a stoical philosopher^f, who delivered lectures upon Christianity in a public school at Alexandria. The church of that city was now under the care of Julianus, who succeeded Agrippinus in the bishopric in the year 181: but the bishops do not appear to have had the office of teaching in the catechetical schools, though in some respects they had the management of them, and the appointment of the teachers seems to have rested with the bishops^g. This office required a man of learning, and one who could fix the attention of the heathen, as well as give instructions to the new converts. Pantænus possessed these qualities to a remarkable degree: and we may judge of the taste for literature which he encouraged among his pupils, when we find him attended at this period by Clement, who is generally distinguished by the name of the Alexandrian. It has been disputed whether this city or Athens was the birth-place of Clement, and it appears, from an expression of Eusebius^h, that his parents brought him up in heathenism. His conversion however took place at an early period of his life, and his Christian educa-

^c Phot. *Cod.* 118. This is very possible, but we can hardly say the same of what is added by Photius, that Pantænus had heard some of the Apostles themselves.

^f Eus. *H. E.* V. 10. He is called a Pythagorean by Philip-Sidetes, apud Dodwell, *Diss.*

ad Iren.

^g See Michaelis, *Exercit. Hist. de Schol. Alex.* in *Symbol. Lit. Bremens.* vol. I. fascic. 3. l. 1. §. 5.

^h *Præp. Evang.* II. 2. p. 61.

For the history of Clement, see Guerike *de Schol. Alexandr.* p. 30.

A.D. tion was received under Pantænus in the schools of
 186. Alexandria.

There is some authority for supposing, that the governor of Egypt was favourable to the Christians during part of the reign of Commodus. That important trust was committed, in the year 186, to Philip, whose daughter Eugenia is placed in the list of Martyrs¹. It is said that he wished to marry her to Acilius, one of the consuls of this year; but that she declined the connexion, and concealed herself in the dress of a man among that peculiar race of people, who are described by Philo under the name of *Therapeutæ*, and have been identified by others with the Essenes. The history of these men is very obscure. In some points they resembled the Christians, and were likely to be attracted by the preaching of the Gospel. The Christians also were likely to seek for refuge among them, whenever they were persecuted by their heathen enemies: and when we come to consider the rise of monachism, we may perhaps have to inquire further into the character of the *Therapeutæ*. The account, which connects them with Eugenia, the daughter of Philip, is perhaps unworthy of credit, though the facts related do not appear improbable. If it might be received, the governor of Egypt was at this time, or shortly after, a believer in the Gospel; and such a conversion could not fail to be highly advantageous to the Christians of Alexandria. We shall perhaps see reason presently to believe, that the story is not altogether destitute of foundation.

The church at Jerusalem has not engaged our

¹ The Acts of Eugenia are quoted by Baronius ad an. 188.

attention for a long time. We saw the Christians permitted to settle in the city, when it was re-founded by Hadrian in 135: and since the Jews were strictly excluded from the same privilege, we may hope that this was one step toward their living free from molestation. Jerusalem, or rather *Ælia*, was probably a place of no importance during the whole of the century; and the catalogue of the bishops is almost the only circumstance preserved of its ecclesiastical history. I mentioned that Marcus was appointed to the bishopric when the new city was founded; and he seems to have held it till 161, when he was succeeded by Cassianus^k. His continuing to hold it for so long a period might perhaps indicate an absence of persecution: but upon the same principle we might suspect that troublesome times succeeded; for between the last mentioned year and the fourth year of Commodus (A. D. 184.) we find the names of nine bishops, which gives an average of only two years and an half to each of their bishoprics^l. We observed the same rapid succession in the thirty-one years which preceded the taking of the city by Hadrian: and it is perhaps unsafe in either case, particularly in the latter, to infer that the lives of so many bishops were shortened by martyrdom. We read of no military movement in the country, except the short revolt of Avidius Cassius in 175, the scene of which lay in Syria: and the observation, which I have quoted from Tertullian, that no Christian was found in the ranks of

A. D.
186.

^k Eus. Chron. The Roman Martyrology speaks of the martyrdom of Marcus in the reign of Antoninus. Octob. 22.

^l Their names were Cassia-

nus, Publius, Maximianus or Maximus, Julianus, Caius or Caianus, Symmachus, Caius, Julianus, Apion or Capito. In 184 Maximus succeeded.

A. D. 186. the insurgents, might lead us to hope that they were not molested by the government. We shall find however the same quick succession during the remaining years of Commodus^m: and in the absence of further information, we must be content to pass over this phænomenon without being able to explain it.

This is perhaps the place for mentioning Theodotion's version of the Jewish scriptures, which was one of the greatest literary undertakings of the age, though the apostasy of its author takes him out of the class of Christian writers. It is quoted by Irenæus, who appears to have written his great work before the year 189, which allows us to believe, on the authority of Epiphaniusⁿ, that the translation was made in the reign of Commodus; and the Alexandrian Chronicle fixes it expressly to the year 184.^o Theodotion was a native of Pontus, but he appears to have resided at Ephesus. He was at first a Christian; and we may account for his embracing the heresy of Marcion, either from both of them being natives of Pontus, or from Theodotion living at Ephesus, where Gnosticism had flourished from the earliest times. He then cast off his belief in Christ altogether, and went over to the Jews; or according to others he became an Ebionite. The Ebionites certainly availed themselves of his translation, which seemed to favour their notion of Jesus

^m Narcissus was bishop when Victor excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor, which happened before the death of Commodus; and between him and Maximus there were three bishops, Antoninus, Valens, and

Dolichiannus.

ⁿ De Mensur. 17. p. 172.

^o Dodwell places it in 175. *Diss. ad Iren.* IV. 41. p. 377. See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sac.* II. *Scl. cap.* I. 60.

being born in the ordinary way^p. It was probably undertaken at the suggestion of the Jews, from A. D. 186. whom he learnt the Hebrew language: and though he may have rendered some passages erroneously to serve a purpose, he is allowed, in parts of his work, to have produced a translation which is much better than the Septuagint.

^p Iren. III. 21.

LECTURE XXI.

A. D.
186.

THOUGH the indifference of Commodus to matters of religion, and his tyrannical treatment of his subjects, were the unintentional cause of a cessation of suffering to the Christians, it was natural that their enemies should shew their hostility whenever an opportunity occurred. We have an instance of this in the death of Apollonius, who is supposed, on good grounds, to have been a senator of Rome^a. He was brought before Perennius on the charge of being a Christian: and since Perennius appears to have been put to death in 186^b, we may so far approximate to the date of this transaction. Perennius, who had shared the command of the prætorian guards, in conjunction with Paternus, was, upon the death of his colleague, invested with the management of almost all the affairs of the empire^c: and the emperor was glad to commit to him the trouble of listening to criminal charges. In the present instance Perennius probably wished to save Apollonius: and the accuser was sentenced to a painful death in pursuance, as it is stated, of an imperial decree. This might allude to the letter of Hadrian to Minucius

^a Eus. *H. E.* V. 21. Hieron. *Catal. Script.* c. 42, et *Epist.* LXX. 4. p. 427. must have happened between 183 and 186. p. 84.

^b Pagi ad Baron. an. 189. ^c Lamprid. *Com.* 5. Herodian. I. 19. See Gibbon, c. IV. Vol. I. p. 143. ed. 1807. Ruinart says that the event

Fundanus^d, or to that of Antoninus Pius and M. Aurelius to the cities of Asia Minor^e; in both of which there was a punishment denounced for any person who accused another merely of being a Christian. We have seen that this principle had been evaded, if it was not virtually repealed by subsequent enactments: and the history of Apollonius is perhaps a proof that when imperial edicts were at variance with each other, magistrates took the liberty of acting upon that which suited their own views, without considering which was the most recent. It might have been thought that the acquittal of Apollonius would have immediately followed the execution of his accuser. This however was not the case. The members of the senate seem to have taken up the question, and Perennius urged Apollonius to plead his cause before that body. He did so in a discourse of much learning; which was perhaps the first instance, or at least the most remarkable, of Christianity forming a subject of discussion in the Roman senate. The conduct of the senators is rather inexplicable. They acted upon what was termed an ancient law, that if a person was once brought to trial upon this charge, and did not deny it, his punishment necessarily followed, and Apollonius accordingly received sentence of death. This *ancient law* seems to answer to the instructions which were given to Pliny by Trajan: but the senators forgot that the same edict by which the accuser of Apollonius had already suffered, was a virtual repeal of the principle laid down by Trajan: and nothing could be more iniquitous than

A. D.
186.

^d See page 76.

^e See page 118, 127.

A. D. 186. that two edicts, which, when taken separately, were favourable to the Christians, should be so brought to bear upon each other, that the accuser and the accused should both be put to death. Apollonius was a man of learning and a philosopher; and the defence which he delivered in the senate was extant in the time of Eusebius, though it is now lost. Some persons have considered him to be the same Apollonius who wrote against Montanus^f: but I have mentioned, upon other authority, that the latter was bishop of Ephesus, and there can be little doubt that they ought to be considered as distinct.

It does not appear that the emperor took any part in the death of Apollonius, and the persons who devised it were perhaps wise in bringing the matter before the senate. Commodus himself was still under the influence of Marcia; and we have another instance that the prejudice against the Christians was becoming less with persons of rank, when we find that Severus, who was afterwards emperor, allowed his son Caracalla to have a Christian nurse. Caracalla was born at Lyons in 188^g, while his father was living there as governor of the province. Severus had himself been cured of some malady by a Christian named Proculus Torpacion: and Tertullian, who mentions this anecdote^h, has been thought to connect Proculus with the person who is named by Dio as the preceptor of Caracalla. We know that Proculus was an inmate in the family of Severus till the time of his death; and the fact of Caracalla having a Christian nurse cannot be disputed, as it rests on the contemporary authority

^f See page 155, 159.

^h Ad Scap. 4.

^g Pagi ad Baron. an. 199 et 219.

of Tertullian. If it be objected that the future character of Caracalla reflected little credit on his education, it must be remembered that it was not his preceptor, but his nurse, who is stated to have been a Christian. This woman may have had nothing to do with forming his mind, and we do not know how long she continued her attendance. It is however remarkable, that a heathen writer speaks of Caracalla being particularly mild and gentle in his early years. It is said, that when he saw any persons exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre, he shed tears, or turned away his face; and we have seen that this cruel punishment was often inflicted upon the Christians. When he was seven years old, he saw a playfellow beaten for belonging, as it is termed, to the Jewish religion; but it is highly probable that the boy was a Christian; and the young Caracalla took it so much to heart, that for some time he would not look at his father, nor at the father of the boy, nor the persons who beat him. The anecdote seems at least to shew that Severus had some people about him who were Christians: and the character of his son during this period forms a pleasing contrast with that of his maturer years.

A. D.
188.

The season of peace, which the church was now enjoying, is indicated by what we read in Eusebius^k of several persons travelling into distant countries to preach the Gospel. Some of the accounts which we have of these missions may be received as authentic, while others are extremely doubtful. Eusebius seems to have believed the tradition which

ⁱ Spartian. *Caracall.* I.

^k II. E. V. 10.

A. D.
188

he had received of Christianity being preached in India by Pantænus. I have spoken of this celebrated man as president of the catechetical school in Alexandria: and according to Jerom^l he undertook his journey to the East some time after the year 188, when Demetrius had succeeded Julianus as bishop of Alexandria^m. This same writer has preserved the interesting fact of the Indians having sent a deputation to Alexandria to ask for some person to instruct them; and a fitter person could not perhaps have been selected than Pantænus. We know nothing of the success which he met with in that distant country. An attempt has been made in modern times to account for the existence of some Christians on the eastern coast of Malabar, by their having received the Gospel from St. Thomas. I have mentioned the doubts which attend such a notion in a former Lectureⁿ: and it would perhaps be equally fanciful to connect these Indian Christians with the preaching of Pantænus: to which we must add, that opinions are greatly divided as to the country which is meant by India in this tradition. Jerom appears to have understood the country properly so called, since he speaks of the Brahmins receiving instruction from Pantænus. Others, however, have supposed Ethiopia to be intended, which lay contiguous to Egypt: and others again have looked to Arabia Felix, which was sometimes called India by the ancients. The tradition, which had reached Eusebius, might lead us to think that Bartholomew had preached in

^l Catal. Script.

^m Guerike (*de Schol. Alex-
andr.* p. 29.) thinks that Pan-

tænus went to India before he
was president of the school.

ⁿ Lect. XI. p. 326.

India: but it is rather a suspicious circumstance, that Pantæus is said to have found a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, written in Hebrew characters, which Bartholomew had left there. The use of such a document to the natives of India, if written in Hebrew characters, is not very apparent; unless we adopt the conjecture of Mosheim^o, that the persons who sent to Alexandria for a teacher were Jews settled in the country: but there are good grounds for concluding, that this Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew, of which so much has been said, never really existed. The Ebionites had a Gospel, which appears to have been taken in great part from that of St. Matthew, and they perhaps wished to have it received as genuine^p. If they did so, they may have been the inventors of the story that Pantæus found an Hebrew Gospel in India; and Eusebius does not at all say that Pantæus himself made such a statement upon his return. We do not indeed know for certain whether he ever returned to Alexandria: the fact is stated by Jerom^q, and the evidence of a late writer^r has been adduced to prove that he resumed, upon his return, his place of teacher in the catechetical school: but it is difficult to reconcile this statement with Eusebius, who speaks of Clement, the most learned of the pupils of Pantæus, supplying his place as teacher in the catechetical school; and one of his works, entitled, *An Exhortation to the Heathen*, was perhaps written soon after the year 190, when Pantæus

A. D.
188.

^o De Rebus ante Const. part. i. p. 519.
cent. II. §. 2.

^q Catal. Script.

^p See Lecture XI. p. 330.

^r Philippus Sidetes, apud Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III.

Dodwell. *Diss. ad Iren.*

A. D. 190. had left the city. There is reason for thinking, that he had published some works before the year 197^s: and it has been conjectured, that his Exhortation to the Heathen, and his longer work, entitled, *Pædagogus*, or the Instructor, were the substance of discourses delivered by him in the catechetical school. The Christians were now becoming the assailants in the war of the pen. They had still to explain their doctrines to the heathen, and to remove the calumnies which were spread against them: but they took the opportunity of attacking the whole system of paganism, with its irrational impieties. They had now nothing to fear on the score of learning, and the writings of Clement may be considered as forming a new era in Christian literature.

Among the traditions which are deserving of no credit, we may mention that of Lucius, a British prince, having sent to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome, with a request that some person would go to preach the Gospel to him. Eleutherus held the bishopric from the year 173 to 189, or to 185, according to other calculations: and most of the accounts suppose him to have received this message soon after his appointment. The only circumstance, which gives any colour of truth to this story, is the mention of the name of Eleutherus; and perhaps there was some circumstance about this time, which was favourable to the spreading of the Gospel in Britain. But it is impossible to give any credit to the fable concerning

^s This is founded upon the notion of his being the Clement mentioned by Caius: (apud Eus. *II. E. V.* 28.) and

if so, he had published before the excommunication of Theodotus by Victor.

Lucius^t; and there is some evidence, that the Britons did not receive Christianity from Rome, or from any of the western churches, since they are known to have agreed with the Asiatics in their mode of keeping the Paschal festival^u. We have the authority of Tertullian for saying, that Christianity had now made its way into parts of the island which had not been visited by the Romans; an expression, which is perhaps oratorical; but he must have known that the Gospel had made some progress there, and it had perhaps been gradually gaining ground during the whole of the century.

A. D.
190.

It is Eusebius, who places the death of Eleutherus in the tenth year of Commodus, or in the year 189: and Victor, who succeeded him as bishop of Rome, was engaged in more than one transaction of considerable importance. Every thing however confirms the remark made above, that the reign of Commodus was comparatively a period of peace to the Christians. There is no certain evidence that it was interrupted by any direct interference of the emperor. The death of Apollonius may have been an insulated circumstance: though if he was a member of the senate, he was not unlikely to have companions in his suffering, since the business of the senate was always preceded by a sacrifice^x; and the Christians could hardly be present at such a ceremony. The martyrologies speak of a senator named Julius, who was put to death in this reign for refusing to

^t It is told by Baronius, ad an. 183. See Usher, *Antiq. Eccles. Brit.* c. I. p. 7. Stillingfleet, *Antiq. of the British Church*, c. II. Mosheim, *de re-*

bus ante Const. cent. II. §. 3. Bower, *History of the Popes*, Eleutherus.

^u Bede, *Hist. Eccles.* III. 25.

^x Aul. Gell. XIV. 7.

A. D. 190. sacrifice^y: and Lampridius names Julius Proculus among the many senators who were murdered by Commodus: but whether they were the same person, or whether any Christian of that name was martyred, must remain uncertain. We must say the same of a partial persecution, which Baronius supposes to have taken place in the year 190. Commodus is known to have given a splendid exhibition of games in that year, which was the fifteenth anniversary of his assuming the proconsular power: and he insisted upon divine honours being paid to himself, under the character and in the garb of Hercules. Many persons were put to death for laughing at this extravagant absurdity^z: and the martyrologies speak of some Christians who shared the same fate. The account is by no means improbable, though it rests on little authority: and we may add, that the present year was likely to set the populace against the Christians, on account of some severe visitations which befell the city. The whole of Italy was suffering from a pestilence, which, as is often the case, was followed in Rome by a scarcity of food. Many public buildings were also destroyed by fire: and if Commodus put the Christians to death for refusing to worship him as Hercules, he might easily persuade the people that such victims would avert the anger of the Gods.

The time however was approaching, when the world was to be freed from the monstrous impieties of Commodus: and though his cruelties to his heathen subjects had given some respite to the Christians, we cannot doubt that the latter felt thankful

^y Baron. ad an. 192. Num. III. ^z Dio, LXXII. 21. p. 1221.

for his removal by death. This event happened on the last day of the year 192, and his end was sufficiently tragical. He was first poisoned and then strangled by Lætus the commander of the prætorian guards, his chamberlain Eclectus, and Marcia whom I have already mentioned as the wife of the latter, and the mistress of Commodus. History says nothing more of this woman, whose disgraceful life might well have been forgotten, if it had not been for her partial attachment to Christianity. A. D.
192.

In tracing the fortunes of the church, we are not required to dwell upon the political events which followed the death of Commodus. The year 193 saw three emperors, beside two other pretenders to the empire. A. D.
193. Helvius Pertinax, who had been prefect of the city, was killed by the prætorian guards, before he had held his honours quite three months. Didius Julianus then purchased the empire by offering to each of these same soldiers 250 gold pieces, or upwards of 200*l*. He survived his purchase only by two months. As soon as his accession was known, three persons declared themselves his opponents in different parts of the world; Pescennius Niger in Syria, Clodius Albinus in Britain, and L. Septimius Severus in Pannonia. The latter deserved the empire for his activity, if not for his virtues. He was now forty-seven years old, having been born at Leptis in Africa. His education had been literary as well as military: and we might view his character with more interest, though with much more abhorrence, if it could be proved that he was the governor of the province, who tortured the martyrs at Lyons in the year 177. It is certain that

A. D. 193. he held that station, but most probably at a later period^a: and what I have mentioned of his retaining in his household a Christian who had cured him, and of his having a Christian nurse for his son Caracalla, might shew that he was not much prejudiced against persons of that religion. He had the prudence to march immediately for Rome, having first neutralized the rivalry of Albinus by giving him the title of Cæsar; and his approach to the capital was the signal for Julianus being put to death. He stayed in Rome only thirty days, and immediately set out for the east to encounter Niger.

A. D. 194. The principal events of the year 194 were the death of Niger, after more than one defeat from the forces of Severus, and the commencement of the siege of Byzantium. We have again the evidence of Tertullian^b, that the Christians did not join Niger, as he also said of them during the former insurrection under Avidius Cassius. This however does not tell to their credit or discredit: for when the empire was vacant, the legions in Syria had as good a right to set up an emperor as those in Pannonia: but if Tertullian is correct as to the fact, the Christians were likely to profit by this circumstance, when Severus had killed his rival, and was inquiring into the persons who had supported him. The Jews indeed appear to have applied to Niger for a remission of their tribute, which he refused to grant them; and they could get no better terms from Severus: but there is reason to think, that the heathen had by this time learnt to distinguish between the Christians and the Jews: and if Severus felt any displeasure against

^a See note i, page 174.

^b Ad Scap. 2. Apol. 35.

the latter, he may for that very reason have favoured the Christians. A. D.
194.

He passed the following year in making expeditions into Arabia, and the countries bordering upon the Euphrates: at which time he made a treaty with Abgarus, king of Edessa^c, who is supposed, upon good grounds, to have been a Christian. The siege of Byzantium also continued, and was not brought to a close till 196, when the city surrendered to the forces of Severus. Cæcilius Capella had commanded the garrison for Niger: and the fact of his not being supported by the Christians is proved in this instance by an event which took place during the siege, and which excited considerable sensation in the church at large. A writer, who lived not long after this period^d, has mentioned Theodotus, as being excommunicated by Victor for saying that Christ was a mere man. Epiphanius informs us, that Theodotus was a native of Byzantium; and that being brought before the governor of the city, in the time of some persecution, and examined, together with several others, on the charge of being a Christian, he denied his faith, and so escaped the death which was inflicted upon the rest^e. Epiphanius professes himself ignorant of the particular persecution: and various conjectures have been made as to the time in which it took place. I should be inclined to conclude, that it was in his native city Byzantium, and during some part of the three years' siege which it sustained from the forces of Severus^f.

^c Herodian. III. 27.

^d Supposed to be Caius, apud Eus. II. E. V. 28.

^e Hær. LIV. 1. p. 463.

^f This is partly the opinion of Tillemont, (*Mémoires*, tom. II. part. 2. p. 270.) though he makes a confusion as to dates.

A. D.
196.

Tertullian informs us, that when the city was taken, Cæcilius congratulated the Christians^g: from which we must infer, that they had been previously in a state of suffering. It seems most probable that Cæcilius had himself been harassing them for not taking arms in favour of Niger. We must suppose also, that the inhabitants espoused the same side with the army, or the city would not have held out so long: and when their cause began to be desperate, it was very likely that they would wreak their vengeance upon the Christians who refused to take up arms. It was while many of his companions were suffering martyrdom, that Theodotus denied his belief in Christ, and so for a while he escaped. But when the city was taken, and the Christians were freed from danger by the presence of the victorious army, some of them reproached Theodotus for his shameful cowardice. He then went to Rome, and was for some time unnoticed: but being recognised and again taunted for his apostasy, he defended himself by saying that he had not denied God, but man: evidently meaning to say, that he believed Christ to be a mere man. This impiety was brought to the ears of Victor, who expelled him from the communion of his church^h.

It seems strange to our present notions, that Theodotus was by trade a dresser of leather, and yet a man of considerable learning. Such however was the fact. He had studied the Greek philosophy, and

^g Ad Scap. 3.

^h The tradition is scarcely deserving of notice, that Victor assembled a council of fifteen bishops, which condemned Theodotus and Ebion. (Concil. ed.

Lab. vol. I. p. 602.) Prædestinatus also mentions, that the Theodotians were refuted by Craton, a bishop of Syria. c. 33.

was himself an author : but he and his followers are charged with altering some of the books of the Old and New Testament. Many persons have been perplexed with what is said by the writer quoted by Eusebius, that Theodotus was the father and founder of this heresy, which denied Christ to be God. Other writers have also spoken of him as inventing this notionⁱ : which seems at variance with what we know of the tenets of the Cerinthians and Ebionites. These heretics believed that Christ did not descend upon Jesus till when he was baptized : and though they believed *Christ* to be an emanation from God, they held that *Jesus* was an human being, born in the ordinary way. This distinction between Jesus and Christ, which has been overlooked by most writers, will perhaps explain why Theodotus is said to have been the founder of his heresy. No person before him had believed *Christ* to be a mere man. Such a notion was never conceived by any Cerinthian or Ebionite, nor by any other Gnostic. This impiety was reserved for Theodotus at the end of the second century, who discarded the doctrine of Christ descending upon Jesus at his baptism, and held that Jesus was the Christ, (that is, a teacher commissioned and inspired by God,) from the moment of his birth. Thus Theodotus was the first who believed *Jesus Christ* to be a mere man : but it must be remembered, that though he denied his preexistence and inherent divinity, he believed in his miraculous conception, and taught that he was born of a virgin by the Holy Ghost^k. His opinions therefore agreed

ⁱ Bampton Lectures, note 11. p. 278. Pseudo-Tertull. *de Præscript.* 53. p. 223.

^k Theodoret. *Hæc. Fab.* V.

A. D. 196. very closely with those of the first Socinians : and we have seen that they were disclaimed by the church as soon as they were avowed.

Theodotus attracted several followers, as every person was sure to do, who introduced any new doctrine at Rome. Another Theodotus, who was a banker, Asclepiades or Asclepiodotus, Apollonius or Apollonides, and Hermophilus, are mentioned as holding the same doctrines, and, like their master, corrupting the scriptures. They were also noted for an extravagant attachment to the study of logic and mathematics. They even carried this taste so far, as to have recourse to syllogisms and geometrical demonstrations, when they were called to defend their errors in religion. But the most celebrated supporter of this heresy was Artemon, or Artemas, who seems to have lived not long after Theodotus¹ : and he is stated to have agreed with him in believing the miraculous conception as well as the simple humanity of Jesus^m. These persons retained so much of the customs of the church as to have a bishop of their own. The first who is mentioned as holding the office was Nataliusⁿ, who so far differed from his master, that he had courage to suffer for his faith in some persecution : and it was no doubt considered a great triumph, when they could shew a confessor^o at the head of their party. His salary was 120 denarii each month ; which tells us something of the customs of the times : and we have an

¹ See Wesseling, *Probabil.* c. 21. p. 172.

^m Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* II. 4.

ⁿ Eus. *H. E.* V. ult.

^o This was the title given to

persons, who had been imprisoned, or suffered in any other way, for their religion, but who had not been put to death.

extraordinary instance either of miraculous inter-
ference or of fraud, in the manner in which Natalius
was restored to the church. But this belongs more
properly to a later period, when Zephyrinus was
bishop of Rome.

A. D.
196.

The excommunication of Theodotus by Victor
happened most probably not long after his arrival
at Rome in the year 196 or 197: and the following
year is mentioned^p as the date of a transaction, in
which Victor was less creditably engaged, and car-
ried his love of excommunication to a much more
unwarrantable length. The controversy about the
Paschal festival had continued to divide some parts
of the eastern and western churches, ever since Poly-
carp and Anicetus had discussed the question at
Rome in 158. The two parties however had not
conducted themselves with the mildness of those
bishops, and the dispute was running high at the
period which we are now considering^q. It is plain,
that the church was now to a considerable degree
enjoying a state of peace: and we have not yet read
of the Christians meeting in such large numbers to
debate upon their affairs, nor of so many churches
acting in concert^r. We have seen meetings of the
clergy in Asia Minor on account of the heresy of
Montanus, and the decision then appears to have
been unanimous: but we now read of many more
councils being called, and of churches in very distant
countries communicating with each other^s. The
result of these conferences shewed, that a very small

A. D.
193.

^p Hieron. *Chron.* ad an. 198.

^q For this controversy, see
Ittigius de Hæresiarch. Append.
ad sect. II. 6. p. 46.

^r Some doubtful accounts of
councils may be seen at page
103, 212.

^s Eus. *H. E.* V. 23, 24.

A. D. 198. proportion of the Christian world was opposed to the majority. The churches of Asia Minor^t adhered to the Jewish method of observing the Paschal festival on the fourteenth day of the first month; whereas all the other churches kept it on the day before the Sunday on which they celebrated our Lord's resurrection. It is singular, that even the church of Jerusalem was opposed to those of Asia Minor upon this point. Theophilus, bishop of Cæsarea, and Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, took the lead among the bishops of Palestine. Cæsarea appears to have been a kind of metropolitan see: but Jerusalem was not ranked under it, and held an independent place on account of its apostolical antiquity. Cassius, bishop of Tyre, and Clarus, bishop of Ptolemais, also attended this meeting of the churches in Palestine. The bishops of Pontus met under the presidency of Palmas, and another council was held at Edessa. The unanimous decision of these synods was against the Jewish method of keeping the Paschal festival; and they all sent letters declaratory of their sentiments to the different churches.

There does not appear to have been a council held at Alexandria: but the Christians in that city exchanged letters with some of the Asiatic synods^u: and it was ascertained that there was no difference between them on the controverted point. We know

^t By this I mean the proconsular Asia. It is probable that the churches of Cappadocia took the same side: such at least was the practice in the year 256. See the letter of Firmilianus, a Cappadocian bi-

shop, *inter op. Cypr.* ep. 75.

^u Eutycheus says that Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, wrote to Victor and to the bishops of Jerusalem and Antioch. *Annal.* ed. 1658. p. 363.

also, that Clement of Alexandria published a work upon the subject, in which he laboured to refute the Asiatic or Judaizing party^x. Irenæus convened the churches of Gaul, and they were perfectly unanimous in the same view of the subject : which is perhaps remarkable, since Irenæus himself had come from Asia Minor : and this is one poof that the Asiatic Christians, who settled in that country, found the Gospel already established there, and churches planted. Bacchyllus expressed the opinion of the Corinthian church to the same effect : and Victor, bishop of Rome, committed to writing the sentiments of his own clergy. There does not appear to have been a meeting at Rome of any other Italian churches : and it is quite plain that all these other churches, both in Europe and Asia, though they were in communication with Victor, were quite independent of each other. The churches, which were founded by Apostles, were looked up to with particular respect, and in matters of controversy their opinions were held to be of weight, because they were supposed most likely to preserve apostolical traditions : but when Tertullian names the apostolic churches, he places Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica and Ephesus in exactly the same rank as Rome^y. They all had a succession of bishops from the time of the Apostles : and if the date of their foundation had been observed, the last place would have been given to Rome.

The person who took the lead on the opposite side was Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, who was now sixty years old, and he speaks of being sup-

^x Eus. *H. E.* VI. 13.

^y De Præscript. 36. Compare Irenæus, III. 3. p. 175.

A. D.
198.

ported by a great number of bishops: but it is probable, that they were confined to what was called the proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the metropolis: and almost every city seems at that time to have had its bishop^z. Polycrates had been in communication with several churches upon this question, and the church of Rome had requested him to call a meeting of the bishops who agreed with him. This was done: and a letter was written in their name by Polycrates to Victor and the Roman church, in which he speaks in a firm though charitable tone of adhering to the custom which had been followed by their ancestors. They defend themselves by the authority of the apostles John and Philip, and by the more recent example of Polycarp and other martyrs. Polycrates speaks of seven relations of his own, who had held the station of bishops, all of whom had kept the Paschal festival on the fourteenth day.

This declaration of the Asiatic bishops was met in a different tone by Victor, bishop of Rome. He first endeavoured to persuade all the other churches to exclude those of Asia Minor from their communion. But he stood alone in this uncharitable proposal, which was rejected by all the other churches. He then wrote letters in the name of his own church, announcing that it would not hold communion with any of the churches of Asia Minor^a. The exact na-

^z The Christians of Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia agreed with those of Asia Minor upon this point at the time of the council of Nice. (Athanas. *de Synod.* 5. p. 719.) but it has been supposed, that this was not the case in the time of Victor.

^a Mosheim has clearly proved that this is the meaning of the passage in Eusebius, *De Rebus ante Const.* Cent. II. c. 72. See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sel. cap.* II. 8. p. 82. Bower's *History of the Popes, Victor*.

ture of this excommunication is not explained: but it seems to have consisted in hindering the members of any of these churches from eating the Lord's Supper with their brethren at Rome. When a Christian of one city went to another, he would naturally wish to join in this solemn ceremony: it was a sign of their holding one common faith: beside which, they had the custom of sending a portion of the consecrated elements from one diocese to another, in token of peace^b: and Victor appears to have cut off the Asiatic churches from any communion of this kind. The sequel shews how entirely the church of Rome at this time was destitute of any preeminence or authority over other churches. They not only refused to follow the example of Rome, but some of their bishops wrote to Victor, exhorting him to have a greater regard for unity and charity; and even rebuking him, according to the expression of Eusebius, with some sharpness. Among the rest he was addressed by Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who had perhaps known him when he visited Rome in the time of Eleutherus: and the letter is a beautiful specimen of that spirit of peace and concord which should mark the conduct of a Christian bishop. It is said to have had the effect of reconciling all the parties^c: and there is the most satisfactory evidence^d that the unity of the catholic church was not broken by this temporary disagreement.

We learn from this letter, among other particulars, that the fast, which was kept before Easter,

A. D.
198.

^b Irenæus apud Eus. *H. E.* V. 24. The custom was suppressed by the council of Laodicea in 367 or 372. Can. 14.

^c Anatol. *Canon. Paschal.* ed. 1633. p. 445.

^d Firmilian. *inter op. Cypr. Epist.* 75.

A. D. 198. continued a longer or shorter period in different churches. Some made it last only one day; some, two or more: and others kept a fast of forty hours: but these different customs caused no diminution of peace and good-will. I may observe in this place, that the custom of keeping a fast before Easter was universal in the church from the earliest days: but disputes have arisen as to the time when this fast was extended to forty days^e. The same diversity which is mentioned by Irenæus, is spoken of also by Socrates, who wrote in the fifth century^f: and he says plainly, that the Apostles had left this matter free to every one's liberty and choice, that no one should be compelled to do a good thing out of necessity or fear. A similar difference existed as to the mode of abstinence, and the particular kinds of food which were not to be eaten: and it does not appear that members of the same church held themselves bound to follow the same rules. No Christians fasted upon a Sunday^g, not even the Montanists^h. This was the case also with the days between Easter and Pentecost: but we know for certain, that each individual held himself at liberty to prescribe a fast to himself on any day which he pleasedⁱ. There is evidence that Wednesdays and Fridays were considered days for fasting as early as the second century^k. The bishops also had power to enjoin a general fast upon any parti-

^e See Bingham, XXI. 1. Ittigins, *Hist. Eccles. Sæc. II. Scl. cap. IV.* 38. p. 265. Hartmannus *de Rebus Christianorum sub Apostolis*, c. XVI. p. 395. Le Sueur, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, an. 206.

^f II. E. V. 22.

^g Tertull. *de Coron. Mil.* 3.

^h *Ib. de Jejun.* 15.

ⁱ *Ib.* 13.

^k Clem. Alex. *Strom.* VII. 12. p. 877.

cular occasion¹: but this of course applied only to the members of their own church. We have seen that one division of the Gnostics, particularly the sect of the Encratites, distinguished themselves for severe rules of abstinence. The Montanists also carried the religious obligation of fasting to a great length: and this was likely to make the orthodox party less inclined to such habits. It is probable, however, that the rise of Montanism was the gradual and imperceptible cause of more general rules being laid down for fasting throughout the whole catholic church.

A. D.
198.

The dissatisfaction which Victor felt with the Asiatic churches, may perhaps assist us in fixing the date of another transaction, in which this bishop was engaged. Tertullian speaks of a bishop of Rome, who was on the point of recognising the pretensions of Montanus, but was dissuaded by Praxeas, who had lately arrived from Asia^m. There are good grounds for thinking that this bishop was Victorⁿ: and it has been conjectured^o, (though the notion would be highly discreditable to the bishop,) that his quarrel with the Asiatic churches inclined him to give vent to his feelings by favouring their opponents the Montanists. The heresy of Montanus had now been gaining ground for several years, and appears to have disturbed the peace of the church, not only in Asia Minor, but in other

¹ Tertull. *de Jejun.* 13.

^m Adv. Prax. c. 1.

ⁿ See Pagi ad Baron. an. 173. Orsi thinks it was Eleutherus, *Ist. Eccles.* vol. II. p. 323, as did Valesius: and others have said Soter or Pius:

but Ittigius, Wormius, Tillemont, &c. agree with Pagi. See Wernsdorff *de Montan.* §. XII. p. 35. note 22.

^o Allix. Wormius, *Hist. Sabell.* c. 2. p. 90.

A. D. 198. parts of the world. The heads of the church and men of learning had been decidedly opposed to it: but multitudes of both sexes believed Montanus and his associates to be really inspired: and while the former were directing the censures of the church, the latter retorted by describing their opponents as wholly destitute of the Spirit^p. It was obviously desirable that some steps should be taken to allay these dissensions. The letter which Irenæus conveyed to Eleutherus from the church of Lyons, and which is described as a letter of peace^q, may have been upon this subject. The successor of Eleutherus had either made overtures to the Montanists of Asia Minor, or (which might be another conjecture,) he was thinking of restoring the Montanists, who were in Rome, to the communion of the church, when Praxeas dissuaded him from taking such a step. He reminded him that his predecessors had always been opposed to Montanus: and I have mentioned that Soter, who preceded Eleutherus, is named among the writers who published against this heresy. The arguments of Praxeas prevailed with Victor. He had written letters, announcing his conciliatory intentions, and he now wrote in a contrary tone. The inspiration of Montanus was not acknowledged at Rome; and the question still continued a fertile source of dissension and ill-will.

This history brings us acquainted with the rise of another heresy, which was much more concerned than that of Montanus with the fundamentals of Christianity. Praxeas was himself the author of it.

^p The name given to the catholics by Tertullian is *Psychici*.

^q See page 177.

He is stated to have been at first a follower of Montanus^r, which would enable him to give Victor much insight into the real character of the Montanists. The latter, as I have observed^s, were divided into two parties. One of them, under Æschines, held doctrines similar to those of Sabelius: the other, of which Proculus was the head, was orthodox upon that point. Praxeas had been a disciple of Proculus: but after a time he took the opposite side; and continuing a Montanist, and going over to the party of Æschines, he wholly abjured Montanism, and became himself the head of a party. We know nothing more of his history before his coming to Rome, except that he had once been imprisoned for a short time on account of his religion^t. I have spoken of his conference with Victor: and we are perhaps to infer, that he did not at first disseminate any erroneous tenets, or the bishop would hardly have given him this mark of confidence. After a time however he became heretical on the subject of the Trinity. He denied that the Son and the Holy Ghost were distinct persons, and taught that they were merely modes or operations of the one Being called God. It is singular to find Praxeas using precisely the same language as modern Unitarians, and speaking of himself as the worshipper of one God, whereas his opponents believed in two or three Gods^u. Tertullian, who wrote against him, exposes this fallacy, and shews that the doctrine of Praxeas, if pushed to its consequences, must lead us to believe that the Father himself was born of the Virgin Mary, that

^r Pacianus ad *Sympronianam*.^t Tertull. *l. c.*^s Page 160.^u *Ib.* et c. 3.

A. D. 198. he suffered on the cross, and was himself Jesus Christ. The name of Patripassians was given to persons who held this belief: and though neither Praxeas nor Sabellius would probably have acknowledged such a doctrine, their followers have never yet been able to rescue themselves from the charge. There is evidence that some persons had taken this view of the relation between the Father and the Son as early as in the time of Justin Martyr^x: but Praxeas is the first whose name is recorded; and we may suppose that he propagated his doctrines with some assiduity, not only because he was condemned by the next bishop, Zephyrinus, but because Tertullian directed against him one of his most laboured treatises. There is reason to think that he passed over from Rome into Africa: and it may have been this which brought him immediately under the notice of Tertullian.

The history of the Paschal controversy has led me to mention the names of some bishops who were of note at that period. We read also of Serapion, bishop of Antioch, who succeeded Maximinus in that see about the year 189, and who published against the heresy of Montanus^y. He seems to have been at the head of a council of bishops who condemned this heresy: and even in the remote country of Thrace there were bishops who did the same. Montanism appears to have now extended itself from Asia into Greece. Tertullian speaks of meetings being held in the latter country, where the supporters of that sect were represented by deputies from different parts of the world^z; and if Victor

^x Apol. I. 63. p. 81. Dial. cum Tryph. 128. p. 221.

^y Eus. II. E. V. 19.

^z De Jejun. 13.

had not been dissuaded from acknowledging the pretensions of Montanus, they would perhaps have extended themselves still further. Another writer, whom I have already mentioned, and who flourished at this period, was Rhodon, a native of Asia, who had studied under Tatian at Rome: but he afterwards wrote against some of the errors of his master; and also applied himself to exposing the discordant systems of the followers of Marcion^a. The latter heretic had been dead some time: but his pernicious philosophy was taken up by several persons, the most distinguished of whom at the present period were Syneros and Apelles.

The dates of some of the transactions in which Victor was engaged, may be uncertain: but in mentioning the excommunication of Theodotus by Victor, we had brought down the history of Severus to the year 196 or 197: in one of these two years^b having now freed himself from all danger of a rival in the East, he marched his army into Gaul, where Albinus, the third competitor for the empire, waited his arrival. A pitched battle was fought near Lyons in the beginning of 197 or 198, in which Severus was again victorious, and his opponent killed. The conqueror immediately marched to Rome, which he had not visited since the first days of his accession to the empire. The fifth anniversary of this event was now celebrated with great magnificence: and having thus got rid of both his rivals, he no longer dissembled his revenge, but acted with severity against the supporters of Niger and Albinus. It

^a Eus. *H. E. V.* 13.

196. (Diss. de Tertull. Apol.

^b Mosheim says it was in §. 22.) Pagi says 197.

A. D. 193. was perhaps on this occasion that Tertullian noticed, what I have already mentioned on his authority, that no Christian was punished by Severus on this account. The fact may have been true, and observed by the Christians, though the emperor may not have been aware of it: and these repeated instances of the Christians not having supported the losing party, would rather lead me to infer, that at this time they were not fond of engaging in military service. I do not mean that they objected to such service in the abstract from motives of religion; and we have evidence, in the course of this century, that there were Christians in the army. Whatever may be thought of the miracle of the Thundering Legion, it at least shews that there were no reasons of religion which would have hindered it from being composed of Christian soldiers: the martyrologies supply many proofs of the same kind; and though Tertullian at length brought himself to believe that a Christian could not serve in the army without compromising his religion^c, yet when he wanted to magnify the numbers of the Christians, he stated it as a well-known fact, that the camps were full of them^d. There can be no doubt that a Christian would see many things in the regular customs of an army, which would shock his religious feelings: the auspices and sacrifices which accompanied military service, would seem to him a mockery and profanation^e: but if he was only a spectator and not an actor in these ceremonies, he would perhaps consent to witness them; and those who were converted

^c De Coron. Mil. 11, 12. De Idol. 19.

^d Apol. 37.

^e Tertullian's Treatise *de Corona Militis* was written upon an occasion of this kind.

while they were actually on duty, would not think it necessary to change their profession. A. D.
198.

When the heathen became more intolerant in compelling the Christians to join in the sacrifices, which was the case in the latter half of the second century, it is probable that the Christians became more unwilling to enlist in the army : and this may have enabled Tertullian to say, that none of them were found among the supporters of Cassius, Albinus, and Niger. If this was the case, they felt the advantage of their conduct when Severus returned to Rome, and began to take his revenge upon the supporters of his rivals. There are reasons however to suppose, that the Christians did not escape without some molestation. It was observed, that when the emperors returned from any military expedition, and were celebrating their victories in the city, the Christians alone did not join in the congratulations and festivities^f. They were unable to do so from feelings of religion. They could not take part in immoralities and impieties : and for this they were sure to experience the insults and hostility of the heathen. If Tertullian wrote his defence of Christianity in this year, as Mosheim has conjectured^g, he had witnessed a persecution of this kind, when Severus returned from Gaul : but arguments have been advanced for supposing it to have been written at Carthage in the year 205^h : and upon the whole there is not much evidence of the Christians being molested during the six first years of the reign of Severus.

^f Tertull. *Apol.* 35.

^g Diss. ad Hist. Eccles. per-

tinent. vol. I. Diss. I.

^h Pagi ad Baron. an. 201.

LECTURE XXII.

A. D.
199.

IN the year 199, Severus, with his two sons Caracalla and Geta, set out to make war with the Parthians; and if the Christians suffered at Rome during their absence, the emperor must be acquitted from taking any part in their ill-treatment. Being now arrived at the end of the second century, we may pause to make a few remarks upon the state of Christianity at that period. We have traced it through a long series of persecutions, with a few years of comparative peace at the last: and never was the saying more verified than throughout the whole of this century, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. There is evidence, that the Gospel had been preached, not only in Arabia and Persia, but even in Bactria and India. If we turn to Africa, there had been a church at Alexandria from very early times: there was now one at Carthage; and the whole northern coast from Egypt to the Atlantic contained settlements of Christians. It has been supposed by some persons, that the Gospel was introduced into Africa from Rome: and the situation of the two churches, as well as an agreement between their liturgies^a, seems to confirm such a supposition. The notion of the

a Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*, §. VIII.

Gospel having been preached in that country by any of the Apostles, though maintained by some writers, is supported by no sufficient evidence^b: but if a council of seventy African bishops was held in the year 215, as we shall see presently, we must be obliged to conclude, that Christianity had been established there a long time, and its introduction cannot be placed very late in the second century. In Europe, we find Christianity planted in Italy, Spain, Gaul, and Britain, to the west: there were churches in Thrace and parts of Scythia to the east, as well as in parts of Germany^c, Dacia, and Sarmatia. Tertullian, who is the chief authority for these statements^d, perhaps speaks rhetorically, when he says, that the Gospel had penetrated into islands and various countries, which had not as yet submitted to the Romans.

I have quoted the same writer^e as saying that the army was full of Christians. He speaks of them holding office in provincial towns, transacting business in the forum, having seats in the senate, and living even in the palace of the emperor. We have had abundant proof of their being men of learning: and we know much more of their controversial writings, than of any contemporary publications of heathen authors. There were also many books composed in this century by the Gnostics: but they have all perished, though we have still so many

^b Schelstrate, *Ecclesia Africana*, Diss. I. c. 2.

^c Germany is expressly mentioned by Irenæus, I. 10. p. 49. and Tertull. *adv. Jud.* 7. See G. Liron, *Singularités Historiques et Littéraires*, tom. IV.

p. 193. Tillemont, *Mém.* tom. IV. p. 1082. Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sæc. I. Sel. cap.* VII. 8. 12. p. 486. Fabricius, *Lux Salut. Evang.* p. 417.

^d *Adv. Judæos*, 7. 8.

^e *Apol.* 37.

A. D. 199. works from the pen of their Christian opponents. Gnosticism was perhaps not so fashionable in the latter part of the century, as it had been in the former. It was now divided into many branches : and though the irrational absurdity of the system had by no means diminished, it appears to have given less anxiety to the Christians now than formerly. Another heresy had lately been supplanting it, which being highly mystical in its character, and encouraging supernatural pretensions, was likely to attract many followers. It was embraced, as we shall see, by men of learning : and though dissensions within the church must always produce much evil, there can be no doubt that the various heresies, which arose in the second century, were an encouragement to men of learning to exercise their talents. These publications must have produced some effect upon the heathen. The Apologies had perhaps a wide circulation : and whatever other causes may have combined to propagate the Gospel, we must ascribe much of its success to the legitimate influence of argument and reason.

It would be a much more difficult and delicate question, whether any of this success was owing to the exercise of miraculous powers^f. In speaking of the state of Christianity at the beginning of this century, I have shewn the necessity of admitting that some persons must have been then alive, who had received spiritual gifts from the hands of the Apostles. We are expressly told that Polycarp had received them ; and he did not die till after the

^f See Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.* II. 28. p. 141. Pfanner *de Donis Miraculosis*.

middle of the century. The names of other persons are also mentioned: but every one must admit, that the instances recorded of these gifts are extremely rare toward the end of the century. The power of exorcising evil spirits is claimed for the church by Tertullian as a fact beyond dispute^g: and it is hardly possible to deny, that some effect was produced of this kind, which even the heathen considered preternatural. Justin Martyr speaks of these exorcisms as not uncommon at Rome in his day^h: but he seems rather to point to them as the remnant of a power which was once much greater. Irenæus also asserts their existence: but he speaks with equal confidence of having seen much more unequivocal miracles, such as speaking with tongues, healing diseases, and even raising the deadⁱ. It has been observed, that Irenæus does not mention any particular instance. But this is to insinuate, that his statements are actually false. I would rather call to mind, that he might have seen many persons in Asia Minor, who had received these miraculous cures much earlier in the century, and when some were still alive, upon whom the Apostles had laid their hands. His testimony cannot be set aside altogether: and we find similar arguments in favour of Christianity from the exorcism of evil spirits, in the writings of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch^k, and Minucius Felix^l. It must however be allowed, that the evidence in favour of miracles becomes much less strong as the century advances; and this is ex-

A. D.
199.

^g Apol. 23.

^h Apol. II. 6. p. 93. A Dissertation was written in German by Kraft, entitled, *Historie*

vom Exorcismo.

ⁱ II. 32. 4. p. 166.

^k Ad Autol. II. 8. p. 354.

^l Pag. 252. 254. ed. 1672.

A. D. 199. actly what we might expect. It ought also to be taken as a proof, that the writers of those times did not intend to deceive. Their statements confirm what seems most in accordance with the operations of the Almighty, that He only works miracles to serve some special purpose. It is not for us to say, that He saw no such occasions in the course of the second century^m. If the Fathers had filled their pages with accounts of these miracles, we might have been inclined to reject them: but when we find these notices introduced very sparingly, and with a direct avowal that such cases were once more frequent, we might at least conclude that they did not intend to deceive. We have perhaps the evidence of an heathen, that the Christians were not over credulous, or easy to be imposed upon by pretended miracles. In the account which Lucian has given of the impostor Alexander, we read of his forbidding Christians to attend his mysteriesⁿ. It is true that he excluded them as being atheists, and the same prohibition was extended on the same grounds to the Epicureans: but Lucian tells us expressly that Alexander treated them in this way, because they discovered and exposed his impostures^o. On the other hand, we find Alexander professing to heal diseases, and even to raise the dead^p: which is perhaps some proof, that he had heard of such miracles being worked by the Christians; and he seems also to have known, that they were not persons who would believe a miracle upon slight or insufficient grounds. Jesus Christ had now sup-

^m Mosheim says as much as this. *De Rebus ante Const. sæc.* III. §. 4.

ⁿ Pseudomant. c. 38.

^o Ib. c. 25.

^p Ib. c. 24.

plied the world with other evidences of the truth of his religion, and miraculous interference gradually ceased. The actual cessation of it was imperceptible: and, like the rays in a summer's evening, when the sun has set, they may be seen to linger on the top of a mountain, though they have ceased to fall on the level country beneath.

A. D.
199.

Among the ordinary means, which contributed to the spreading of the Gospel, we must place those Fathers of the church, as they are generally called, whose writings I have lately mentioned. They are far too numerous to have their names repeated here. We may however single out Justin Martyr: and Irenæus belongs exclusively to the second century, though his death perhaps happened in the third. Clement of Alexandria may be claimed by both centuries: but I must say a few words concerning a man, whose writings I have often quoted; and as he was the first of the Latin Fathers in point of time, so perhaps was he also for the depth and variety of his learning.

This man was Tertullian, a native of Carthage, whose birth has been fixed, but without any certain grounds, about the year 150. He has been thought to speak of himself as a convert from heathenism; and Jerom informs us that he had the rank of a presbyter. It has been doubted however whether he belonged to the church of Rome or Carthage: but he certainly resided for some time in the latter city⁴. The most interesting event in his history is his embracing the heresy of Montanus, which he is supposed to have done about the year 199: but the

⁴ See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. p. 530.

A. D. 199. date cannot be exactly ascertained. Jerom seems to have heard a story of his having some quarrel with the clergy of the church of Rome, and of his becoming a Montanist through envy^r: but we know nothing of the transaction; and the mind of Tertullian seems to have been peculiarly suited by nature to adopt the mystical notions and ascetic principles of Montanus. Some of his treatises were evidently written after his lapse into heresy: but it is difficult to settle this point minutely; and the authority of Tertullian upon great points of doctrine is considered to be little, if at all, affected by his becoming a Montanist. Several of his treatises have come down to us. Those which he wrote in defence of Christianity throw great light upon the history of persecution. His works against Marcion and Valentinus may be coupled with that of Irenæus, as supplying the most authentic information concerning the Gnostics. He wrote also against Praxeas: and the treatise is full of expressions, which shew the belief of the church at that time in the doctrine of the Trinity. Tertullian is supposed to have lived almost to the middle of the third century, and he saw the African church in a state of considerable suffering; but no particulars have been preserved of his personal history. It has been thought, that he became less attached to the sentiments of Montanus in the latter part of his life, and less disposed to separate himself from the church: but a sect of Tertullianists, as they were called, continued at Carthage till the end of the fourth century^s. It ought

^r Catal. Script. v. *Tertull.* *rinth.* xiii. 2.

The envy is mentioned in ^s Augustin. *Hær.* 86.
Pseud-Ambr. in *Epist.* 1 Co-

however to be mentioned, to the credit of Tertullian, that Cyprian, who may have been personally acquainted with him in his old age, was extremely fond of his writings, and looked upon him as his master^t. A. D.
199.

Eusebius has recorded the names of several other writers, who flourished at the present period. Heraclitus, Maximus, Candidus, Apion, Sextus, and Arabianus, are now entirely forgotten, though their works formed only a small part of the Christian literature of the second and third centuries. I ought also to mention another person, who, though apparently not an author, attained to great celebrity in the reign of Commodus, and left behind him a name not only for preeminent sanctity, but for having worked several miracles. This was Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, whom I have mentioned as holding that station, when Victor excommunicated the Asiatic churches. The only miracle recorded of him is his converting some water into oil for the use of the lamps on the night preceding Easter Sunday^u: and though it is easy to attribute some deceit either to Narcissus himself or the relater of the story, we should remember that this is almost the only specific miracle which Eusebius records in the course of the second century; and if the whole was an invention of a later age, we should have met with similar accounts in the histories of other bishops. Narcissus seems to have led a life of particular strictness and severity: but this did not save him from calumnious accusations. His accusers confirmed their charges with such dreadful imprecations, that Narcissus thought proper to withdraw from public life. He

^t Hieron. *Catal. Script.* v. Tertull. ^u Eus. *H. E.* VI. 9.

A. D. 199. continued several years in retirement, and it was not even known whether he was alive: but his innocence is said to have been proved by his accusers meeting with the very same punishments which they had imprecated upon themselves. The supposed vacancy in the see was filled up after a time, but not till the neighbouring bishops were consulted; and three persons^v in succession held the see to the end of the reign of Severus, after which time we shall see Narcissus again returning upon the scene, and restored to his former station.

A. D. 202. It was in the ninth year of Severus, perhaps in the year 201 or 202, that Victor^x was succeeded in the bishopric of Rome by Zephyrinus. The character of Victor is perhaps the least amiable of any we have yet met with among the heads of the church. His conduct to the Asiatic churches cannot be defended: but with respect to his treatment of Montanus and Theodotus, we ought not to judge him without knowing more of the effect which heresy had produced upon the Roman Christians. It must be remembered also, that Montanus was undoubtedly an impostor, and Theodotus held a doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, which was opposed to the united voice of the church from the earliest times. We are informed by Jerom^y that Victor was an author, and wrote upon the Paschal controversy; but nothing has survived of any works which he composed.

Zephyrinus, as we shall see presently, had much

^v Dius, Germanio, Gordius or Gordianus.

^x His martyrdom is mentioned by some later writers.

See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 189.

^y Catal. Script. c. 34, 53.

less peaceful times to contend with than his predecessor. He seems however to have been equally active in suppressing heresy. Praxeas, who had come to Rome in the time of Victor^z, was excluded from the communion of the church by Zephyrinus; and the measure at first seems to have succeeded. The heretic not only recanted, but wrote a book expressive of his penitence. The date of this transaction is not marked, nor do we know how long Praxeas continued in communion with the church: but there is evidence, that after a time he returned to his former errors^a; and we shall see, in the course of the next century, that he had many followers. The heresy of Theodotus, which denied the divinity of Christ, also engaged the attention of Zephyrinus. Natalius, whom I have mentioned^b as receiving the salary of a bishop from these heretics, was induced at length to confess his error, and with some difficulty was restored to communion by Zephyrinus: but, if a contemporary writer may be believed^c, it was not till he produced the visible marks of a severe chastisement, which he had received in the night from the hands of angels. The story was probably believed: and we may conclude, that Zephyrinus was active in suppressing this heresy, since the followers of Theodotus spoke of this bishop being the first to hold a doctrine contrary to their own. They acknowledged that the divinity of Christ was then held by the church of Rome; but they said that Zephyrinus had been the first to introduce it, and that all his predecessors had believed Jesus Christ to be a

^z See page 221.^a Tertull. *adv. Prax.* 1.^b Page 214.^c Caius *apud Eus. H. E. V.* 28.

A. D. 202. mere man. The falsehood of this assertion is shewn by a contemporary writer, who is quoted by Eusebius. He appeals to Justin Martyr, Tatian, Miltiades, Melito, Irenæus, and Clement, as having all maintained the doctrine of Christ's divinity: and passages might be brought to prove the same point from nearly every writer of the second century.

These domestic matters, as they may be termed, perhaps happened early in the century, while the church continued in the same state of tranquillity which it had enjoyed in the reign of Commodus. The time of trouble was however returning. The emperor had been engaged in his eastern campaigns since the year 199; and we know of nothing which was likely to make him think of the Christians, except that Abgarus, king of Edessa, is said to have joined him with his forces^d, and he is conjectured to have been a Christian. In the year 202 Severus returned into Syria, and, after passing through Palestine, he visited Alexandria. It is much to be wished that we had a more detailed account of this journey. From some cause or other he was greatly offended with the Jews. One writer^e speaks of the senate decreeing a triumph to Caracalla for a victory over the Jews, and it seems to be fixed to about this period: but we know nothing more concerning it; and it is difficult to conceive that the Jews could have offered any military resistance, which would have called for a triumph. We have seen that Severus had treated the Jews with coldness, if not with more decided marks of displeasure,

^d Herodian. III. 27.

Pagi ad Baron. an. 203. Dod-

^e Spartian. c. 16, 17. See well, *Diss. Cypr.* XI. 42.

after the defeat of Niger; and he may perhaps have known that they had not really favoured his cause. In the present year he appointed a severe penalty for any person who embraced the Jewish religion^f; and it is still more difficult to account for his including Christianity in the same decree. We know of no offence which the Christians had given him, and the heathen had been learning gradually to distinguish them from the Jews: but the persecution seems to have raged so violently, when the signal was once given, that we are perhaps to look for no other cause, than that the heathen had become impatient to renew their former attacks, and could no longer bear to see the progress which the Gospel was every where making. Severus was not like Hadrian and the Antonines, who were really attentive to matters of religion according to their own views: nor yet was he a monster of impiety and profaneness like Commodus: but during his campaigns in the east, he must have seen many temples deserted, and must have observed a religion different from his own rapidly gaining ground. There were perhaps many persons in his train, who would fill him with prejudices upon this point, and even represent the rising sect as dangerous to the peace of the empire. Some such counsellors as these must have had an influence over him, when he issued the edict lately mentioned, by which all persons were prohibited from embrac-

A. D.
202.

^f Hadrian had forbidden the Jews to practise circumcision at all: Antoninus Pius had allowed them to circumcise their own children, but not proselytes. (p. 96.) Between that period and 202 they seem to have exercised the right of admitting proselytes, or Severus would not have prohibited it. Dodwell thinks it was given to them by M. Aurelius. *Diss. ad Iren.* IV. 42. p. 381.

A. D. 202. ing Christianity. We have the evidence of Tertul-
 lian^g, that before this time he had rather been
 favourable to the Christians, and had saved many of
 them from persecution ; but he now issued an edict,
 which was more severe than those of any former
 emperor. Its aim was to cut up the new religion by
 the root, or rather to prevent the seed from being
 sown : and not content with this, he sent an
 order to Rome, by which the persons who attended
 illegal meetings were to be brought before the pre-
 fect of the city^h. Whatever may have been the
 intention of this order, it was construed to pre-
 vent the meetings of the Christiansⁱ : and thus they
 were not only hindered from making converts, but
 from celebrating the public ceremonies of their
 religion.

These cruel laws revived the spirit of persecution
 in most parts of the world : but it raged nowhere
 more fiercely than in Alexandria, which city was
 visited by Severus, when he had passed through Pales-
 tine, and he is stated to have been particularly
 curious in prying into the Egyptian mysteries^k.
 Baronius has conjectured, that one cause of the
 emperor going to Egypt was the protection which
 Philip, the governor of that country, had lately
 afforded to the Christians. I have mentioned this
 person under the year 186 : but the authority for
 his conversion to the Gospel, and his subsequent
 martyrdom, is open to much suspicion ; and the
 letter, which Severus is said to have written to him,
 commanding him either to adhere to the old religion

^g Ad Scap. 4.

^k Dio Cass. LXXV. 13. p.

^h ff. de Offic. Præf. urb. l. I. 1266. Spartian. *Sever.* 17.

ⁱ Tertull. *de Jejuniis*. 13.

or give up his situation, can hardly be admitted as an authentic document¹. If the story is founded upon facts, Philip may have been superseded as governor of Egypt by Lætus, who was certainly in office when the persecution broke out in the tenth year of Severus, and who shewed himself very willing to second the cruelty of his master. Demetrius was still bishop of Alexandria, and continued to hold that office for several years more. We are not told that he was a personal sufferer in the present season of trial, but he had the pain of seeing great numbers of his flock cut off by martyrdom. Among these was Leonides^m, the father of Origen, who was thrown into prison and beheaded: and the name of his son stands so preeminent among Christian writers, that some notice should be taken of his early history.

Origen was in his seventeenth year at the time of his father's martyrdom, having been born in the year 184 or 185. The astonishing powers of his mind developed themselves at a very early age; and his father is said to have secretly blessed God for giving him such a child, even while he pretended to chide him for going beyond his years in the study of the Scriptures. His education led him through the whole range of literature and science, as well as the principles of religion. We have the authority of Porphyryⁿ for saying, that he was familiar with the writings of Plato and of the later Platonists. Among the latter is perhaps to be mentioned Ammonius, who will occupy our attention

¹ See Baronius ad an. 204. *Script.*) Leonides was a bishop. III.

^m According to Suidas and two MSS. of Jerom (*Catal.*

ⁿ Apud Eus. VI. 19.

A. D. hereafter, and who, though a Christian, may also
202. be described as a Platonist. He is known to have been one of the masters who gave lessons to Origen : and the latter had also the advantage of receiving instruction from the celebrated Clement, who probably became the first teacher in the school when Origen was four years old^o. He was an enthusiast from his very childhood : and no sooner did the persecution break out, than he distinguished himself by courting death in every shape, and seeking eagerly for his crown of martyrdom. His mother contrived to divert him from his purpose : but when his father was put in prison, he wrote him a letter in these few expressive words, “Beware “that you do not change your mind on our account.” Leonides did not need his son’s exhortation, and was beheaded, together with a great number of companions.

Origen was now left in the seventeenth year of his age with his mother and six brothers. To complete their misfortunes, the whole of their property was seized as forfeited to the emperor ; and the family would have been reduced to beggary, if a lady of rank and fortune had not kindly taken Origen under her protection. She had also adopted as her son a native of Antioch, who at this time was of great repute in one of the numerous sects which flourished at Alexandria. He was most probably a Gnostic : and it is mentioned as a proof of the soundness of Origen’s principles, that though he constantly met this man in the house of his benefactress, and saw the crowds of heathen and even

^o See page 205.

of Christians who flocked to hear him, yet he would never consent to join him in prayer. He now found the advantage of the education which he had received. Though it was so dangerous at this time to profess Christianity, he was able to give instruction in many branches of knowledge: and his own exertions thus put him in possession of a maintenance for himself and family.

A. D.
202.

In the mean time the persecution had made great havoc in the church of Alexandria. The catechetical school was almost broken up. Clement, who had been the chief lecturer in it, fled before the storm, and took refuge in Cappadocia. It was probably during his retirement there that he wrote some of those works which happily have come down to us. His address to the heathen is supposed to have been written before this period: but his great work, entitled, *Stromates*, or *Miscellanies*, alludes to a persecution which was then raging^p. Clement expressly maintained, that it was lawful to seek safety by flight on such occasions: and I mention this, because it was a question, which at this time was discussed among Christians. It was not unusual also for money to be paid: and some churches appear to have been in the habit of purchasing their exemption from molestation by a kind of annual tribute^q. Tertullian took a less indulgent view of the matter, and considered both these subterfuges to be disgraceful: but he carried his rigorous and unbending principles very far after he became a Montanist: and the more rational and moderate party did not think it incumbent upon a man to ex-

^p IV. 10. p. 597.

^q Tertull. *de Fuga*, 13.

A. D. 202. pose himself to martyrdom^r. Even Origen, who in many points was ascetically rigid, took the same view of this question with his master Clement^s. Upon the present occasion, however, he did not have recourse to such a step: and the risks which he ran, not only in encouraging the martyrs during their trial, but in attending them in their last moments, caused his escape to be considered something miraculous.

A. D. 203. In the year 203 we find a new governor of Egypt in the room of Lætus. This was Aquila, who continued the persecution with the same violence as before: and the absence of the emperor, who was now returned to Rome, would perhaps give greater license to the enemies of the Christians. Origen still attracted followers, both among the heathen and the Christians, who came to him for instruction: and the bishop now commissioned him to take the superintendence of the catechetical school. Among his hearers we find the name of Heraclas, who subsequently succeeded Demetrius in the see. His brother Plutarchus was another who suffered martyrdom; and Eusebius mentions the names of several who shared the same fate. Origen very narrowly escaped, and was more than once the object of popular fury. It is perhaps at this period of his life that we are to place the anecdote, which is told of him by Epiphanius^t, that he was made to stand at the temple of Serapis, with his head shaved, and to present branches of palm-trees to the persons

^r See Wernsdorff *de Montanistis*, §. XXXII. p. 97.

^s In Joan. XXVIII. 18. p. 397.

^t Epiphan. *Hær.* LXIV. 1. Huetius supposes it to have happened now. *Origenian.* I. 1. 9.

who came to worship there : but he is said to have used the name of Christ, when he presented them. A. D.
203.
Instead of becoming more cautious, he henceforth devoted himself exclusively to Christian instruction ; and that he might be able to maintain himself without asking for assistance, he sold all his other books, and lived upon the money which they produced, at the rate of four oboli a day. His habits were those of great abstemiousness and severity : and he seems to have held his situation in the catechetical school for several years.

The persecution, which has first made us acquainted with the name of Origen, extended to several parts of Egypt, and even to the Thebaid, which proves that Christianity had made its way into that remote part of the world. We know that the Scriptures were translated into the dialects of Upper and Lower Egypt ; and fragments of these versions have come down to us : but we cannot tell whether those which are now extant were made as early as the second century. It is however probable, that parts at least of the New Testament were translated into these languages, as soon as Christianity was established in the country : and wherever Greek was not commonly spoken, it was almost necessary that the Gospel should be circulated in the vernacular tongue.

The remainder of Origen's eventful history belongs to the third century : and it is time that we should turn to other churches, which were exposed to the same sufferings with that of Alexandria. It was perhaps natural that the persecution should extend from the latter city along the coast of Africa : and the church which was of most note in that part

A. D. 203. of the world was the church of Carthage. We know nothing concerning the time of its foundation : but Tertullian, who was a member of it, speaks of the Christians being extremely numerous there in his day^u. The proconsuls of Africa, during the reign of Commodus, and the former part of the reign of Severus, seem to have treated the Christians with great lenity, and even to have suggested to them different means of evading the laws, which were intended for their annoyance. The names of Cincius Severus, Vespronius Candidus, Asper, and Pudens, deserve to be recorded, as of magistrates who acted in this way^x : and the success of the Gospel at Carthage was perhaps owing to the protection which it received during their government. The translation of the Scriptures into Latin must greatly have assisted in producing this effect. Latin was the language of the proconsular province of Africa ; and it is plain, from the numerous quotations in the works of Tertullian, that the Scriptures were commonly read in that language. The time however was arriving, when this prosperous state of the African church was to be interrupted. Vigelius Saturninus was the first proconsul who put the Christians of his province to death : and it was perhaps not unnatural, that a loss of sight, which came upon him shortly after, should be considered as a visitation from Heaven^y. The account of some martyrs who suffered at Scyllita, a town in that country, is perhaps to be received among the few authentic acts which have come down to us^z : and

^u Ad Scap. c. ult.

^x Ib. c. 4.

^z They appear to have suf-

fered about the year 200. v.

^y Ib. c. 3. Ruinart. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 221.

the same is to be said of the martyrdom of two women, Perpetua and Felicitas, who suffered at Carthage^a. It would perhaps be unsafe to admit these documents as written at the time; but they are undoubtedly extremely ancient; and though they may have received some additions or interpolations from later hands, they were perhaps compiled from materials of much older date.

A. D.
203.

Saturninus was probably in command at the time that Severus visited Africa in 202. The emperor was himself of African extraction: and we know that toward the end of his reign he conferred many favours upon that country. Indulgences shewn to the heathen were often the cause of increased suffering to the Christians: and the governors of the province at this period appear to have rivalled each other in continuing the persecution. The successor of Saturninus was Minucius Firmianus, who was himself succeeded by Hilarianus; and it was under the latter that Perpetua and Felicitas suffered martyrdom. We then meet with the name of Scapula, whose cruelty to the Christians has become more notorious from the circumstance of Tertullian addressing him in a work which has come down to us. Tertullian had embraced Montanism before this period: but he still employed his pen in defence of the Gospel, and many of his treatises were composed about this time. I have mentioned that some critics have placed his *Apology* in the year 205: and a more spirited appeal had scarcely as yet been made to the common sense and humanity of the heathen. The church of Antioch was likely to be among the

^a Both are published by Ruinart. See Tillemont, *l. c.* p. 229.

A. D.
203.

first to suffer from an edict which was issued in its neighbourhood. Serapion was still the bishop of that see, who had been appointed in 189, and held it till the end of the reign of Severus. We are told that he addressed a work to Dominus, who in the time of persecution had gone over to the Jewish religion : and it is most probable that he was addressing one of his own flock^b. We have also proof of a persecution at Antioch, when we read that Asclepiades, who succeeded Serapion, had himself been a sufferer in trials of that kind^c. Even in the remote province of Cappadocia the Christians did not escape. One of the governors of that country, Claudius Herminianus, was particularly incensed against them by finding that his own wife had embraced their religion. He succeeded by his cruelties in extorting from some Christians a denial of their faith ; but he was checked in his career by being seized with a loathsome disorder. For some time he concealed it, that the Christians might not look upon it as a demonstration from Heaven in their favour : but before he died, he had almost become a convert to their religion^d. The name of one of the sufferers in Cappadocia is recorded, whose history will occupy our attention still more hereafter. This was Alexander, bishop of a city called Flavias^e, who was thrown into prison about the year 204^f : his sufferings at least began at that time, and we know that he was in prison at the end of the present reign.

Even the remote province of Gaul did not escape

^b Eus. *H. E.* VI. 12.

^c *Ib.* c. 11.

^d Tertull. *ad Scap.* 3.

^e Valesius ad Eus. *H. E.* VI.

11. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom.

III. part. 2. p. 314.

^f Eus. *Chron.*

the common calamity: it has been asserted that Irenæus, who had held the bishopric of Lyons from about the year 178, suffered martyrdom in the reign of Severus. Stories are told of the city of Lyons being surrounded by soldiers, and all the Christians being put to death^g: but it is safer to say that no particulars are known: and it is plain that great numbers of Christians survived, who continued to propagate the Gospel in that part of Gaul. If the account could be believed, which speaks of the emperor himself being present when Irenæus was put to death, we might conclude that it did not happen till the year 208, when Severus set out with his two sons to repress an insurrection in Britain, and it is not improbable that they passed through Lyons: but the fact cannot be stated with certainty: and the evidence of Irenæus having suffered martyrdom at all is extremely slight^h. There is some reason to think that he died before the end of the century. The evidence is equally unauthentic, which speaks of Zoticus, an Armenian bishop, being put to death at this same period; and I only notice the tradition as shewing, if it is true, that the persecution was general in every part of the world.

I have not yet said any thing of the sufferings of the Roman church, and few if any particulars are known concerning them. Severus returned to Rome

A. D.
203.

^g See Baronius ad an. 205. num. XXVIII. Gregory of Tours speaks of many martyrs having suffered with Irenæus. *Hist.* I. 27.

^h He is called a martyr by Jerom, in *Esai.* lxiv. 4, 5. vol. IV. p. 761, but not in any other passage: also in the work

called *Quæstiones ad Orthodoxos*, quæst. 115. Gregory of Tours asserts it, but he seems to place his martyrdom in 177, which is impossible. See Dodwell, *Diss. ad Iren.* III. 21. p. 259. Raynaud. *Indic. Mart. Lugdun.* p. 284. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 159.

A. D. 203. in 203, and had a triumph for his victories in the East. At the same time he celebrated the tenth anniversary of his accession to the empire. He also married his eldest son Caracalla to the daughter of Plautianus: and there can be little doubt that these united festivities were the signal for many insults being offered to the Christians. Baronius supposes that Plautianus was a prime mover in these scenes of cruelty: and if so, there was perhaps some respite in the following year, when he was put to death for plotting against the emperor and his son. This however was the year in which the emperor chose to have an exhibition of the secular games, but in which he had no regard to the period of one hundred years which ought to have elapsed since the last celebration. These games were attended with many ceremonies, which must have been painful to a Christian even to witness: and their refusal to take part in them was likely to expose them to many insults and cruelties. It may be mentioned, however, that there was now some division of opinion among Christians as to the measures which might be taken to screen themselves from suffering. Tertullian and the more rigid party contended that it was not lawful to fly in the time of persecution, and he wrote a treatise upon this subject. He published another upon the occasion of a Christian soldier being put into prison for refusing to wear a wreath of laurel during a public ceremony. The majority however did not hold these opinions. Some even thought it lawful to purchase their safety by paying a sum of moneyⁱ: and the persecution would perhaps have been less generally felt, if the Montanists

ⁱ Tertull. *de Fuga*, 13.

had not pushed their uncompromising doctrines to so great a length. We know that it was carried on with some violence in the year 207, for Tertullian wrote his work against Marcion in that year, and speaks of the sufferings of the Christians being then very great. He perhaps alluded particularly to the African church: but from the year 202 to the end of the reign of Severus, the Christians in every part of the world were exposed to severe trials. We may judge of the impression which was caused by these barbarities, when we find that a writer named Jude, who published a commentary upon Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks about the year 204, conjectured that Antichrist was shortly to appear^k. He seems not to have been singular in this notion. That the coming of Antichrist was to precede the end of the world, had been for some time the general belief^l: but there is reason to think that all heretics and opposers of the truth were at first looked upon as Antichrist, and not any particular individual who was to bear that name. It was not unnatural that persecutors of the Gospel should be included in this title, and the Roman government would come in time to be spoken of as Antichrist. Montanus and his followers appear to have enlarged upon this idea; and the downfall of the Roman empire held a prominent place in their pretended prophecies. The orthodox party did not at first regard these prophecies: but when the edicts of Severus had once more excited the malice and fury of the heathen, it became a popular notion that the world was drawing to an end. It was thought impossible that God would

A. D.
207.

^k Eus. *H. E.* VI. 7. 181: 7, 2. p. 182: IV. 25, 1.

^l See Irenæus, III. 6, 5. p. p. 322.

A. D. 207. suffer his elect to be thus tortured for a long time ;
 and if the Roman government was Antichrist, his appearance was no longer a thing future, but had actually been witnessed.

Another writer, who flourished about this period, was Minucius Felix^m, and he has left us a dialogue entitled Octavius, which throws considerable light upon the cruel and wicked treatment, which the Christians were now receiving. Minucius Felix was a lawyer of some eminence, who lived at Rome; and we may take his work as a proof, that the same scenes which Tertullian had witnessed in Africa, were also acted in the capital. The persecution did not cease during the remaining years of the reign of Severus: but the emperor could have had little share in promoting it after the year 208, when he set out with his two sons, to complete the subjugation of Britain. The war was perhaps of longer continuance than he expected: and it was not finished when Severus died at York, in the beginning of the year 211. His reign was on the whole extremely disastrous to the Christians. It has been usual with some writers to date the beginning of the persecution from the year 202, when the edicts were issued, which expressly prohibited Christianity: but there is reason to think, that private malice, as well as popular violence, had been at work for some time before. If the atrocities of Commodus had occupied the attention of the heathen, and called them off from molesting the Christians, to provide for their own security, the season of repose was over, when Severus succeeded to the throne. We have principally viewed him as a military commander: but his education

^m For his date, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 1. p. 513.

had not been neglected; and ancient writers have represented him as fond of literary pursuits. His wars were almost always successful, and the empire was considered to be in a state of prosperity during his reign. This was perhaps unfavourable to the Christians. Their numbers were now becoming formidable: and their habits and feelings, upon many public questions, were in direct opposition to those of the heathen. They were set down as either indifferent to the national welfare, or positively hostile to it: and instead of the contempt which they had excited as members of a new sect, they were now looked upon with jealousy, and many were really alarmed at the progress of their opinions. It is probable that Severus was persuaded to view the matter in this light. He had seen the ill effects of political dissension: and nothing but great activity, united with his military skill, had given him the ascendancy over competitors for the throne. He may have thought, that the Christians were likely to form a party in the state, as well as in religion: he was sure to have many persons about him, who would encourage such suspicions: and upon a general view of his character, I should be more inclined to ascribe his conduct to feelings of this kind, than to a natural cruelty of disposition, or a great regard for the national religion. Feelings of the latter kind may perhaps have weighed with his wife Julia Severa, since we are told that Philostratus, who was now teaching oratory at Rome, undertook at her request to write the life of the celebrated impostor, Apollonius of Tyanaⁿ. I have mentioned more than once, that works of this kind were written with a view to depreciate Chris-

A. D.
211.

ⁿ Philost. I. 3.

A. D.
211.

tianity, and to shew that the miracles of Jesus were equalled, if not surpassed by those of heathen philosophers°. The empress may perhaps have been pleased to see this point established: but whether her husband took the trouble to read the book when it was written, or whether it prejudiced him against the Christians, must be considered uncertain. The work acquired some popularity; and the fashion continued through the whole of the following century of setting up Apollonius as a rival to Jesus Christ: but though Philostratus may have furnished some triumph to the enemies of the Gospel, his work is a convincing proof that the author of Christianity was known to have worked miracles, and was looked upon as an extraordinary, if not a superhuman character.

° See Olearius *ad Philost.* præf. p. xxxix.

LECTURE XXIII.

SEVERUS had died at York, in the beginning of A. D.
211.
the year 211: and the accession of his two sons Caracalla and Geta, who had attended him to that distant part of the empire, was not likely to produce any immediate effect upon the Christians, either in the capital or in the east. Caracalla, the eldest of the two brothers, soon began to shew that he intended to assert his seniority. His nurse, as I have mentioned, was a Christian; and in his earlier years he may have heard something of Christianity; but there is no evidence of its having left any impression upon his mind; and the same feelings, which had prompted him more than once to attempt his father's life, were now exhibited in cruelties to his relations and his subjects. Such conduct however, (as was remarked in the case of Commodus,) may rather have caused a relaxation of suffering to the Christians: and one of the first acts of his reign was to allow all exiles to return to their homes, whatever may have been the nature of the accusation against them^a. Many persons were however put to death, who had enjoyed the closest intimacy of the emperor before his accession^b: and it has been thought that some Christians were among the num-

^a Dio Cass. LXXVII. 3. p.
1290. Spartian. *Caracal.* 3.

^b Herodian. III. 50. See
Baronius ad an. 213. num. II.

A. D. 212. ber: this however is very uncertain: and the arrival of the two emperors at Rome in the present year, and the murder of Geta by his brother in the next, afford little matter of speculation to the ecclesiastical historian.

There are however some indications that the persecution, which had continued to the end of the reign of Severus, was now gradually subsiding. I have mentioned Alexander, bishop of Flavias in Cappadocia, who was thrown into prison about the year 204^c. It was about the same period that Clement of Alexandria took refuge in that country. He was personally known to Alexander^d; and the latter speaks of him as one to whom he owed obligations. Clement was probably his superior in age, as well as in learning; and such a friend must have afforded great comfort to the bishop during his long imprisonment. This had not terminated in the first year of the reign of Caracalla: but there was sufficient intercourse between distant churches for the news to reach him, while he was in prison, that a successor was appointed to the see of Antioch. I have mentioned Serapion as holding that bishopric from the year 189, and he appears to have died about the year 211 or 212^e. He was succeeded by Asclepiades, who had been a sufferer in the late persecution: and Alexander, in a letter which he wrote shortly after to the Christians at Antioch, speaks of his bonds having been made lighter by the joyful news of such an appointment^f. Clement

^c See page 248.

^d Alexander *apud* Eus. VI. 14.
Clement dedicated one of his
works to Alexander, Eus. H. E.

VI. 13.

^e Eus. *Chron.*

^f Eus. H. E. VI. 11.

was the bearer of this letter; and I should infer that some improvement in the affairs of the Christians enabled him to leave his retirement in Cappadocia, and to pay this visit to the church of Antioch. Alexander himself was also released shortly after. About the year 214 he took a journey to Jerusalem: and since he is said to have gone thither merely from motives of devotion, and to see the scene of the crucifixion, it is plain that the Christians must have been suffering less molestation. His journey to Jerusalem was an important incident in his life; and will require us to go back to the history of a man, who had now for some time disappeared from the world.

A. D.
212.

A. D.
214.

This was Narcissus, whom I have mentioned as having retired from the bishopric of Jerusalem in consequence of some calumnious reports which were spread against him. His life appears to have been passed during that interval in a course of ascetic discipline and mortification, which was now becoming popular with many Christians, and which obtained for them a character of peculiar sanctity. When three persons had been successively chosen to fill the vacant see, Narcissus at length reappeared, and his innocence having been fully demonstrated, he was constrained to take upon him once more the cares of the bishopric. His great age soon made him feel himself incapable of the burden. Not long after this he is spoken of as being 116 years old; and his clergy decided, rather than to lose his superintendence altogether, to elect another person who should relieve him from his official duties. This is the first instance on record of two persons together holding the same see, and such a practice

A. D. 214. was expressly forbidden by the canons of later councils. Another precedent was also set on this occasion, which has been equally condemned, though it is followed at the present day. Alexander the bishop of Flavias was translated, as we should now term it, from his diocese in Cappadocia to that of Jerusalem. The interposition of Heaven is said to have marked him out for the appointment; and the neighbouring bishops sanctioned it by their approbationⁱ. We are not informed whether Narcissus held the see much longer; but Alexander must have survived him by several years, since he is known not to have died till the middle of the century. In many respects he was one of the leading characters of his day: he was acquainted with Origen and other men of learning: his published letters were extant in the time of Eusebius; and he deserves to be particularly remembered, as having founded a library at Jerusalem, from which Eusebius himself professes to have collected many materials^k.

The history of Origen may furnish us with another proof, that the church was at this time enjoying some repose. We have seen that even when the persecution was at its height in Alexandria, he did not intermit his duties as public teacher in the school. His station must have been one of considerable danger; and, till more favourable times arrived, he perhaps knew little of the condition of other churches. We are told that he paid a visit to Rome while Zephyrinus was bishop^l; that is, before the year 218: and since there are certain grounds

ⁱ Eus. *H. E.* VI. 11. Concerning his translation, see Thomassin, *Discipl. de l'Eglise*, part. I. l. 2. c. 25.
^k Eus. *H. E.* VI. 20.
^l Ib. VI. 14.

for placing this journey in the reign of Caracalla, we may perhaps follow those writers who say that A. D.
214. Origen went to Rome about the year 213^m. This is the period, at which I have supposed the affairs of the Christians to be returning to greater tranquillity; and the notion is confirmed by what we read of Origen undertaking this journey, from the wish of visiting a church of such great antiquity as that of Rome. A journey of mere curiosity must have been made in a season of comparative peace: and Origen, after a short absence, returned to resume his catechetical labours at Alexandria. Demetrius, the bishop of that city, was very urgent in exciting him to the work: and the fame of his teaching had now attracted so many hearers from all parts of the world, that he was obliged to have recourse to a division of labour. Heraclas, who had now attended him for ten yearsⁿ, and was a great proficient in sacred and profane literature, was selected by him to teach the elements of Christianity, while he himself continued his instruction to those who were farther advanced^o. This arrangement gave him more time for the study and exposition of the Scriptures; and it is probable, that at this period he added to his other acquirements a knowledge of the Hebrew language^p; in which he is stated^q to have made such an extraordinary pro-

^m That it was before 215, will appear probable from what will be seen of the personal history of Origen in that year.

ⁿ He had been with a teacher of philosophy (who was probably Ammonius Saccas) for five years before he was a pupil of Origen. Eus. *H. E.* VI.

19. p. 283. See Lecture XXII. page 241, 242.

^o Eus. *H. E.* VI. 15.

^p *Ib.* 16. Huetius, *Origenian.* I. 2, 3. Fabricius, *Bibl. Gr.* vol. V. p. 224.

^q Hieron. *Epsit.* XXXIX. 1. p. 175.

A. D. 214. gress, that after a few days' study he was able to accompany his mother in repeating and singing the Psalms.

The fame of Origen was by no means confined to his Christian pupils. Eusebius assures us, that many heathen philosophers mentioned him in their writings, and inscribed to him some of their works^r. Great numbers were converted by his lectures; and we may judge of the compass of his learning, when we read of his instructing these persons, if he thought it would suit his purpose, not only in other branches of philosophy, but even in mathematics: and under these heads Jerom^s distinctly enumerates geometry, arithmetic, music, logic, grammar, and rhetoric. Thus by every means he attracted the attention of his hearers, and led them by degrees from heathen to Christian learning. The heretics also were won over by his powers of reasoning: and one of these is particularly mentioned, by name Ambrosius^t, who had embraced the Valentinian or Marcionite doctrines, but was convinced of his errors by Origen, and became a deacon in the Alexandrian church. Being a man of fortune, he was afterwards of great service to Origen in enabling him to pursue his literary labours. It is plain, that the Christians were at this time enjoying toleration, not only in Egypt, but in other parts of the east. It is now that we read of an Arabian prince sending letters to Demetrius and to the Roman governor of Egypt, requesting that Origen might be permitted to go and instruct him. The name of the Roman

^r H. E. VI. 19.

^s Catal. Script.

^t Eus. H. E. VI. 18. Epi-

phan. Hær. LXIV. 3. p. 525.
Hieron. Catal. Script.

governor is not recorded : but he at least threw no obstacle in the way, and Origen went into Arabia".

A. D.
214.

It would be interesting to connect this journey with the mission of Pantænus to India^x. I have mentioned that some persons suppose the Indians, who were visited by Pantænus, to have been the inhabitants of Arabia. He went to them about the year 188 : and it is singular that they had then sent an embassy to the same bishop Demetrius, who had lately succeeded to the see. Origen was at that time only four years old : so that the Indians or Arabians could have heard nothing concerning him from Pantænus : it is probable however, that some intercourse was kept up between the Christians in that country and the church of Alexandria. Origen had been a hearer of Clement, who was the personal friend of Pantænus ; so that if the identity of these Indians and Arabians could be established, it would be particularly gratifying to them to have their faith confirmed by this celebrated teacher. There were certainly churches in Arabia about this period. We shall meet presently with a bishop of Bostra, which was the metropolis ; and there is evidence, that Hippolytus was bishop of some other city in that country. His see may have been at the place called Portus Romanus, afterwards Adana, which was a harbour on the Persian gulf : but there is reason to think, that two or more persons have been confounded, who bore the same name, and flourished at the same time. An Hippolytus is mentioned, who was bishop of the sea-port at the mouth of the Tyber ; and some have supposed, that he came from

^u Eus. *H. E.* VI. 19.

^x See page 204.

A. D. 214. Arabia to Italy^y. This however is involved in obscurity. Some valuable works are still extant, which are ascribed to Hippolytus, and many more are lost^z: but whether the author of them was the bishop, who is said by Jerom^a to have been personally known to Origen during his visit to Arabia, must continue uncertain. If the Valesian heretics took their rise in Arabia, as Epiphanius has conjectured^b, we have another proof that Christianity had made some progress there.

A. D. 215. Origen did not stay long in that country, and returned to Alexandria: but in the year 215 he was obliged to seek an asylum in safer quarters. The inhabitants of Alexandria had grievously offended Caracalla. They appear to have expressed their opinion of him, and particularly of the murder of his brother, in no measured terms: and this having come to the tyrant's ears, he resolved to visit them with signal vengeance. After travelling through Germany and part of Asia, he came in person to Alexandria. By dissembling with them at first, he was able to cut off at one blow the leading persons of the city. A general massacre followed: and history has not recorded a plot which was more successfully or more ferociously executed^c. The work

^y Gelasius says that he came to Rome while Callistus was bishop. He has been said to have been a pupil of Irenæus and of Clement of Alexandria: but this is very uncertain. Prudentius mentions an Hippolytus who was torn to pieces. *De Coron.* XI. See Ruinart. p. 168. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 6. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*,

tom. I. p. 361.

^z Eusebius mentions a chronological work, which was brought down to the first year of the reign of Alexander. *H. E.* VI. 22.

^a Catal. Script. Hippol.

^b Hær. LVIII. 1. p. 489.

^c Dio Cass. LXXVII. 22. p. 1306. Herodian. IV. 15, &c. Spartian. Caracal. 6.

of slaughter was so extensive and indiscriminate, that many Christians perhaps suffered in it. Religion however had nothing to do with their present misfortunes. Heathen or Christian, citizen or stranger, were alike the objects of Caracalla's resentment. So little did he care about religious distinctions, that the temples of the gods were openly pillaged; and there were perhaps many persons, who, in the midst of their own sufferings, remembered with remorse, that they had inflicted similar cruelties upon the Christians not many years before. Such however was the strange inconsistency of this emperor, that though he outraged the religion of the Egyptians in their own country, he caused it to be introduced into Rome, and erected magnificent temples in several places to the goddess Isis^d.

Origen, as I have stated, fled from the storm, and took refuge at Cæsarea in Palestine, of which place Theoctistus was then bishop. His fame had probably preceded him, or he soon made himself known as profoundly versed in the Scriptures. He was now in his thirty-second year; and though he had not been ordained presbyter, and would have been considered young in those days, he was allowed to deliver discourses and public expositions of the Scriptures in the church^e. When Demetrius was informed of this, he was displeased, and wrote to the bishop of Cæsarea upon the impropriety of allowing a layman to teach publicly in the congregation. It is plain from this, that Origen's teaching at Alexandria had been confined to the catechetical school; and we learn also, that great pains were

^d Spartian. *Caracal.* 9.^e Eus. *H. E.* VI. 19.

A. D. 215. taken in those days to prevent any thing like irregularity in ecclesiastical discipline. Upon the present occasion however Demetrius appears to have been unnecessarily strict. Not only Theoctistus, but Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, (who was perhaps consulted upon the subject,) wrote in reply to Demetrius, and quoted several precedents, which shewed that other bishops had permitted a similar practice for the good of their flocks. This did not satisfy Demetrius, who followed up his former letter by ordering Origen to return to Alexandria. We are not informed whether he had any actual authority to do this. Eusebius speaks of Origen not being a presbyter; but if he was a deacon, Demetrius might have had a right to command his services. It is however generally supposed, that he had not as yet received any ordination; but he thought proper to comply with the bishop's message, and returning to Alexandria, he once more resumed his office of teaching in the school^f. The inhabitants of that city were now recovering from the vengeance of Caracalla; and all of them having been fellow-sufferers, the heathen would be less likely than ever to offer molestation to the Christians.

The same year 215 has been mentioned as the probable date of an event, which was of some importance when drawn into a precedent afterwards, but concerning which we know very little from contemporary writers^g. It is certain that a council was held of African and Numidian bishops under the

^f He did not return till after Caracalla. See Epiphan. *de Pond.* p. 174.

^g Cave places this event at the end of the preceding century. *Hist. Lit.* Agrippin.

presidency of Agrippinus, who then filled the see of Carthage: and such meetings could only take place when the Christians were tolerably free from persecution. The subject under discussion was one which we have not yet met with in the history of the church; and when the controversy was revived in the middle of this century, no older decision was quoted than that of the council at Carthage under Agrippinus^h. It seems that doubts had been raised, whether persons who had been baptized by heretics needed to have the ceremony repeated when they went over to the Catholic church. The term *heretic*, as I have already observed, was applied in the second century almost exclusively to different branches of the Gnostics. These persons adopted the custom of baptizing their converts; and it is probable that some of them used the same form which had been prescribed by Christ to his apostles. The followers of Theodotus and Artemon, who were decidedly heretical, perhaps administered baptism; but their numbers at present appear to have been small. The Montanists were much more numerous; and though they were allowed to be orthodox on the subject of the Trinity, they were considered heretics in the ancient sense of the term. There can be no doubt, that they agreed with the catholics in the mode of administering baptism: but in a council which was held at Iconium a few years later, the validity of their baptisms was expressly denied. We are not informed, whether the converts from Montanism or

A. D.
215.

^h Vincentius Lirin. expressly calls Agrippinus the first who made such a decision. *contr. Hær.* c. 9. The council is mentioned by Cyprian, *epist.* 71, 73. Augustin. *de Bapt. contr. Donat.* II. 7. vol. IX. p. 102.

A. D. 215. from Gnosticism were the principal cause of the council being held at Carthage in 215. Tertullian is himself a proof that the errors of Montanus had found their way into Africa, though he may perhaps have imbibed them during a visit to Rome: but if it should be thought that Montanism had not made much progress in Africa, it is probable that Gnostic baptisms formed the subject of discussion. Tertullian had already expressed himself strongly against baptisms administered by hereticsⁱ, meaning evidently the Gnostic heretics. He wrote a treatise upon the subject in Greek, which is lost: but in one which is extant, he decides that such baptisms were positively null. The African church seems always to have held this opinion; though, as we shall see presently, it was not maintained by the church at large: and the question, as agitated now, was perhaps one rather of discipline than of faith. It is singular also, that the doctrine which Tertullian was the first to publish, was afterwards turned against his own party, and that converts from Montanism, as I have already stated, were required to be baptized. Whoever were the heretics, whose baptisms were discussed at the council of Carthage, the decision was in accordance with the sentiments of Tertullian. Seventy bishops from Africa and Numidia are said to have been assembled^k: and they decided, that all persons, who had been baptized by heretics, must have the ceremony repeated, when they came over to the church. It was in seasons of peace, which followed a persecution, that these conversions were likely to be most frequent:

ⁱ De Baptismo, 15. de Pudicitia, c. 19.

^k Schelstrat. *Eccles. Afric.* p. 12, 13.

and there can be no doubt, that the heroic conduct of the Christians during their trials was the cause of many persons embracing their religion, when it could be professed without danger.

A. D.
215.

If Tertullian wrote his treatise upon Chastity in this year, or the year preceding, as has been conjectured^l, another question had been agitated, which for many years divided the opinions of the church. This was, whether penitents were to be restored to the communion of the church. Tertullian, who was now a Montanist, took up the severe side of the question in all its rigour; though in a treatise written expressly upon Penitence some years before, he had maintained the milder doctrine, and ascribed to the church a full power of absolving penitents. We collect from his later work, that some bishop had lately issued a decree, by which every crime, even adultery and fornication, might be remitted; and Tertullian inveighs in the strongest terms against such laxity of discipline^m. Baronius assumes, that the person intended was Zephyrinus, bishop of Romeⁿ; and the cardinal is pleased with Tertullian giving him the title of *Pontifex Maximus* and *Bishop of Bishops*. It is evident, however, that these epithets are applied by Tertullian in irony: and if the decree was made by the bishop of Rome, it is also plain that his authority was completely set at nought in the African church. Some persons however have supposed that the bishop of Carthage was intended, which is not

^l Baronius ad an. 216. num. IV. but have supposed Tertullian to have spoken ironically. Fleuri,

^m De Pudicit. 1. *Hist. Eccl.* V. 46. Le Sueur,

ⁿ Others have thought this, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, an. 214.

A. D. 215. improbable^o : and the passage is only of importance as shewing that the question of the admission of penitents was agitated early in the third century. Tertullian makes his complaint with reference to persons who had been convicted of moral offences ; but there is reason to think that penitents of a different kind were the principal cause of the subject being discussed. In times of persecution, and when the Christians had become more numerous, there would be some whose courage failed them in the hour of trial, and who were induced to offer sacrifice, or to perform some other act, which implied an abjuration of their faith. When peace was restored, many of these unhappy persons applied to be readmitted to the communion of the church : and the charitable spirit of the Gospel, as exhibited in those days, allowed them to go through a prescribed course of penitential discipline, and then to be absolved. As we advance onward in the present century, we shall find these cases brought frequently under our notice ; and the readmission of lapsed penitents, as they were termed, became a source of long and injurious controversy. It is not improbable that the question had been discussed when the persecution ceased upon the death of Severus ; and whoever was the bishop that fell under the displeasure of Tertullian, it is pleasing to find the heads of the church adopting the milder and more charitable course.

The bitterness of Tertullian against the catholics, which he exhibited in several publications about this time, may perhaps be traced to some public sentence,

^o This is the opinion of Orsi, *Eccles. an.* 217. vol. III. p. 11, a Roman Catholic writer, *Istor.* 12.

which had been passed against the Montanists. Baronius supposes that they were condemned by Zephyrinus in the year 213: but there is no evidence of this: and though Tertullian speaks of his party being anathematized from every quarter^p, the expression need not be referred to the specific decree of any one bishop or council, nor is there any particular allusion to the bishop of Rome. There is however sufficient evidence, that the disputes concerning Montanism were running high at this period: and it was not likely that the Christians at Rome would escape the infection of that heresy. We have seen that Victor, the predecessor of Zephyrinus, had been persuaded to depart from his conciliatory intention toward the Montanists: and the name of the Roman writer has been preserved, who took an active part against them in the time of Zephyrinus. This was Caius^q, a presbyter in the church of Rome, who is supposed to have written against the heresy of Artemon: but he also published a work about this period against Proclus, or Proculus, who was an eminent person among the Montanists. I have mentioned^r, that the followers of Montanus were subsequently divided into two parties: one of which, under Æschines, maintained opinions similar to those of Praxeas and Sabellius; while the other, of which Proculus was the leader, continued orthodox on the subject of the Trinity. This Proculus was probably the opponent of Caius, and therefore flourished in the reign of Caracalla,

A. D.
215.

^p De Jejun. 1.

^q Eus. *H. E.* II. 25. III. 28. VI. 20. He is perhaps the Caius mentioned at the end of the Epistle of the Church of

Smyrna, as published by Usher; and if so, he had been acquainted with Irenæus.

^r Page 160.

A. D.
215.

while Zephyrinus was bishop of Rome: but Tertulian speaks of him as an old man at that time, and adds, that he had written an excellent work against the Valentinians^s. Though I have spoken of Caius as a presbyter, he is also called a bishop^t: and the expression is taken to imply, that without having any particular see, he was appointed to superintend the churches which were planted in the less civilized portions of the empire. It is also to be remarked, that in one of his writings he condemned the Cerinthian notion of a millennium^u, which was perhaps beginning to receive fresh support from the Montanists; and Caius deserves to be mentioned as the earliest ecclesiastical writer, who is known to have opposed the belief in this doctrine. We shall see, in the course of this century, that from this time it began to be rejected as unscriptural and erroneous.

A. D.
216.

The remainder of the reign of Caracalla furnishes little of interest to the ecclesiastical historian. In 216 he gained some successes in Parthia, and he appears to have behaved with treachery to Abgarus, the king of Edessa. This prince had made a treaty with Severus, and on the faith of it he came now to meet Caracalla. The emperor repaid his confidence by putting him in chains, and seizing upon his palace: and I mention the transaction, because there is reason for thinking that Abgarus, like many of his predecessors, was a Christian^x. This however had probably no weight in urging Caracalla to treat him with injustice: and if he shewed any dislike to the religion of the Christians, he would have been

^s Adv. Valentin. 5.

^t Phot. cod. 48.

^u Eus. II. E. III. 28.

^x Eus. Chron.

equally opposed to any doctrines which put a restraint upon his passions. It should also be mentioned, that if Abgarus was a Christian, he did no credit to the cause of the Gospel, since he is represented as obtaining his dominion by force, and exercising it with the greatest cruelty^y. Caracalla at the end of his reign became much addicted to magic; and among other proofs of it, he imitated his stepmother in honouring the memory of the celebrated impostor Apollonius of Tyana^z. Fancies of this kind were likely to make him acquainted with the doctrines of the Christians: and impostors like Apollonius had naturally a great antipathy to the Gospel: but history has not assigned any particular act of persecution to this emperor. We have seen reasons for supposing that the Christians were enjoying a state of peace: and the only proof which we have of religious intolerance during the present reign, is in a passage where Julius Paulus, a celebrated lawyer, speaks of new and strange religions, which were likely to raise an excitement in the public mind: he says of the persons who introduced them, that when they were in the higher ranks, they were banished; but if they belonged to the lower, they suffered capitally^a. Paulus is said to have lived in the reign of Caracalla: but he must also have lived under other emperors, and we cannot ascertain the precise period of which he was speaking. A law might also be said to be in force, until it was actually repealed; and the magistrates were perhaps authorized to punish the Christians in this way

^y Dio Cass. LXXVII. 12.
p. 1297.

^a Sentent. Recept. l. V. tit.

21.

^z Ibid. LXXVII. 18. p. 1304.

A. D. 216. under Caracalla, as well as under Severus: but the emperor's treatment of his heathen subjects gave them other occupations and other cares, beside that of persecuting the Christians; and this was perhaps the real cause of the latter enjoying their present tranquillity.

A. D. 217. Caracalla did not derive any advantage from his treachery to Abgarus, being himself put to death in the following year 217, in Mesopotamia. Opilius Macrinus, a Numidian by birth, and commander of the prætorian guards, was the instigator of his death, and was himself saluted emperor by the soldiers, together with his son Diadumenus. The late emperor, however, was not unpopular with the army; and Macrinus, though successful in his conspiracy, found it expedient to give him the honours of deification^b. A temple was erected to his memory; and the same people, who had so lately objected to the harmless religion of the Christians, now suffered this monster of depravity to be worshipped as a God. The reign of Macrinus, which lasted little more than a year, produced no effect upon the condition of the Christians, except that two of the principal sees changed their bishops about this period. Aselepiades, bishop of Antioch, was succeeded by Philetus; and Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, by Callistus: and both of these events may be placed in the year 217 or 218.

A. D. 218. Macrinus and his son having been killed by the soldiers in 218, the empire was conferred upon a person of dubious extraction, who bore the name of Varius Antoninus, but is better known by that of

^b Spartian. *Caracal.* 11. *Jul. Capitol. Macrin.* 5, 6.

Elagabalus^c. While he stopped at Antioch on his way to Nicomedia in Bithynia, where he passed his first winter, he had an opportunity of seeing Origen. He travelled in company with his mother and her sister Mammæa; and the character of the latter forms an agreeable contrast, not only with that of her sister, but of the emperor and the persons in his court. Her morals were irreproachable: and even Christian writers have described her as extremely religious. It has been asserted that she was herself a Christian; and we shall see shortly that the Christian doctrines were not unknown to her: but we should certainly be going too far, if we said that she was actually converted^d. She is known to have sent for Origen to come to her at a time when she was staying at Antioch; and upon the whole it seems most probable, that we are to place that event in the present year^e. The family of Mammæa having lived in Syria, the fame of Origen was likely to have reached her: and she now despatched an escort of soldiers, requesting him to come and discourse with her upon matters of religion. It was the third year since Origen had returned from Palestine and resumed his catechetical labours at Alexandria: he complied with the request of Mam-

A. D.
218.

^c His mother was certainly Soæmis, or Semiamira, who was daughter of Julia Mæsa, and sister of Mammæa. His father appears to have been a Syrian, but he had a fancy to call himself the son of Caracalla. See Dio, LXXVIII. 30. p. 1337. Jul. Capitol. *Macrin.* 9. Elagabal in Arabic signifies a mountain, and was a

name given to the Sun.

^d See Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. Sæc. III.* §. 8. who mentions other writers.

^e This is the opinion of Baronius, Orsi (*Istor. Eccles. an.* 218. vol. III. p. 46.) Tillemont (*Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 347.) and the Benedictine editor of Origen. Huetius places it in 222, Pagi in 229.

A. D. 218. mæa, and went to Antioch, where, after staying some time, he returned to Alexandria; and we do not hear of any immediate effects, which resulted from his conference. The heathen writers, though they speak of Mammæa as religious, represent her as extremely covetous^f.

A. D. 219. If the emperor condescended to listen to Origen, he paid no attention to what he heard; and it is to be regretted that his own character was so little influenced by that of his aunt. He is represented by heathen writers as a monster of vice and sensuality; which might appear the more extraordinary, when we read that before his accession to the empire he filled the office of priest of the Sun in a temple at Emesa in Phœnicia. His religion, such as it was, did not forsake him when he was on the throne. He arrived at Rome in 219, and one of his first cares was to establish there the worship of the Sun. He built a temple to this deity on the Palatine hill, near to his own residence; and removed into it all the most sacred ensigns of superstition which the city possessed. Nor was this all. He wished his own priests to study the ceremonies of every other religion, so that if they were retained at all, they should in future be performed in honour of the Sun. The heathen writer^g, who gives us this account, states expressly, that the Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian religions were among the number. All persons throughout the empire were to worship the Sun; and every species of adoration was to be merged in this. Notwithstanding this general edict, we do not read of any

^f Mulier sancta, sed avara et auri atque argenti cupida. *Lamprid. Alexand. 14.*
^g Lampridius, c. 3.

particular molestation which befell the Christians during the present reign. We cannot indeed fail to observe, that this suppression of all religions except one was likely to be favourable to the Christians. The sincere votaries of paganism were at least in the same predicament with themselves: and many of the heathen deities perhaps never recovered the attack which was thus wantonly made upon them by an heathen. I may add, that if the emperor followed up his edict by any pains and penalties, the pagans were more likely to be sufferers than the Christians. One of the charges brought against the latter was, that they had no temples, no altars, nor any external emblem of religion. They could therefore perform their devotions in secret, without committing any open violation of the imperial order: but the heathen, who required temples and altars, and whose religion was one of outward pomp and ceremony, had no chance of escaping notice, if they adhered to the worship of their fathers.

A. D.
219.

The conduct of Elagabalus, both in morals and religion, could hardly fail to make him universally detested. We might wonder that he was allowed to live so long; and after a reign of not quite four years, he was murdered in 222, being then not more than eighteen years old. His cousin Alexander, the son of Mammæa, who succeeded him, was only sixteen: but at that early age he shewed himself as likely to adorn a throne as his predecessor had to disgrace it. His mother had taken great pains to form his character; and the men of learning, who had the care of his education, were selected for their principles. If Elagabalus had

A. D.
222.

A. D.
222.

lived much longer, he would perhaps have defeated these precautions; for in the year before his death, when he caused the title of Cæsar to be given to his cousin, he removed from him all these persons who had been chosen by his mother, ordering some of them to banishment and others to death. It is not impossible that some of the sufferers were Christians; and Alexander's early impressions concerning the Christian doctrines were likely to be favourable. According to one heathen writer^h he not only shewed them toleration, but even offered a kind of divine worship to Christ, and had thoughts of erecting a temple to him. We must not, however, build too much upon expressions like these. Whatever Alexander had heard or read of Jesus Christ, raised in him feelings of admiration: but he had the same feelings towards other historical characters, some of whom were equivocal, and some positively bad: thus he worshipped not only Christ and Abraham, but Orpheus and Apollonius, the latter being probably the celebrated impostor Apollonius of Tyana. He had little images of these persons, which he placed in his own chamber, and prayed to them every morning: but this rather gives us the idea of an amiable and well-disposed child, than of an emperor who was inclined to Christianityⁱ. He had, however, the good sense to copy some customs from the Christians: and having observed that they never filled up any ecclesiastical appointment without publishing the names of the

^h Lampridius, c. 22. 29. 43.

ⁱ Mosheim clearly proves that he was not a Christian. *De Rebus ante Const. sæc. III.* §. 8. See Zeibich. *de Christo*

ab Alexandro in larario culto, in *Miscell. Lips. Nov.* vol. III. p. 42. Jablonski *de Alexandro sacris Christianis per Gnosticos initiato*, ib. vol. IV. p. 56.

candidates, and consulting the people as to their fitness, he ordered the same to be done in appointing the governors of provinces, or any public officer^k.

A. D.
222.

We know from other sources, that great pains were taken by the Christians in conferring ordination upon proper persons. When a bishop was to be chosen, it was the general custom for the nearest bishops of the province to assemble, and the election was made in the presence of the people, who were acquainted with the life and character of the candidate^l. Similar precautions were taken in the ordination of priests and deacons; and it is satisfactory to find that even the heathen were aware of the existence of such regulations. The emperor also quoted the Christians for a saying which he was very fond of, and which he ordered to be inscribed upon many public buildings, *Do not to another, what you wish him not to do to you*^m. But nothing shews more strongly his spirit of toleration, than a decision which he made, when the keepers of a public house claimed a piece of ground that had been occupied by the Christians: the emperor adjudged it to the latter, adding the remark, that it was better for God to be worshipped there in any manner, than for the ground to be used as a pothouseⁿ. This anecdote would be more important, if we might infer from it, that the Christians had now erected buildings in Rome for holding their religious meetings. The words can hardly bear any other meaning, unless we suppose the Christians to have met in the open air: and though the history of the early bishops of Rome is

^k Lamprid. 45.

^l Cyprian. *Epist.* 68.

^m Lamprid. 51.

ⁿ Lamprid. 49.

A. D.
222.

replete with fables, there is some evidence that a church was erected about this period by Callistus. The church which now bears the name of *S. Maria in Trastevere*, and which is undoubtedly an ancient structure, is said to have been built by this bishop; and it is even conjectured by Baronius, that this was the very building which Alexander allowed the Christians to retain. This perhaps would be going much too far: and there are also difficulties attending the history of Callistus. Baronius supposes him to have been martyred in the third year of Alexander; and some ancient accounts ascribe his death to the emperor's own order. But more correct calculations place his death in 222^o, or even earlier. It would certainly seem extraordinary, that the head of the Christians in Rome should have suffered martyrdom at the beginning of this emperor's reign: and if he was martyred at all, he was more probably a victim to the indiscriminating cruelty of Elagabalus. His name is particularly connected with one of those cemeteries, or excavations, in the neighbourhood of Rome, which I have already mentioned^p as furnishing places of meeting and of sepulture to the early Christians. The number of them has been made to amount to forty-three^q, and one bears the name of Callistus to the present day. What has been said of Elagabalus forbidding every kind of worship except that of the sun, makes it

^o So Eus. *H. E.* VI. 21. who is followed by Pagi: but Eusebius, in his Chronicle, places his death in the first year of Elagabalus. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 367.

^p Page 69.

^q Baronius ad an. 226. num. IX. See Orsi, *Istor. Eccles.* an. 222. vol. III. p. 53. and the works of Bosius, Aringhius, Boldetti, &c. upon subterranean Rome.

highly probable that the cemeteries were places of great resort during that reign; and we may be certain, that no public building was then used by the Christians for their religious meetings. If we admit the tradition that a church was erected in the reign of Alexander, it ought rather to be ascribed to Urbanus, who succeeded Callistus as bishop of Rome: but in either case it is the first instance recorded of the Christians assembling in what would now be called a church. It had always been objected to them by the heathen, that they had neither altars, images, nor temples. To the two first of these charges they would have pleaded guilty, but the absence of temples was not owing to any regulation of their own. The charge was brought against them as late as at the beginning of the present century^r, from which we must infer, that if the Christians at that time had buildings for their religious worship, it was not a matter of notoriety to the heathen. It seems more probable that they had no such buildings^s.

The martyrologies mention the names of several other persons who suffered in the reign of Alexander^t; and though such statements are at variance with what we have seen of his education and character, I can hardly think that the traditions are totally without foundation. It is possible that, though the emperor was himself inclined to toleration, he may have had persons about him who thought it their duty to harass the Christians. We have a list

^r Minuc. Felix. p. 91. ed. 1672.

^s See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 68.

^t Martyrol. Rom. Octob. 11. Novemb. 22. But see Ruinart. præf. §. 47, 48. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 354.

- A. D. 222. of several learned and distinguished men, principally lawyers, who formed a kind of council^u: and while the emperor was so young, they were likely to have the management of all affairs of state. One of these counsellors was the celebrated Ulpian, who, unless the martyrologies have entirely spoken falsehood, was a prime mover in many acts of persecution. He is known to have written a work upon the duty of a proconsul, which appears to have contained a collection of laws upon various subjects: and in the seventh book he brought together all the imperial edicts, which had enacted punishments in cases of religion^x. It is much to be regretted that such a collection, which though painful would be highly interesting, is lost: but we may learn from some fragments of the work which remain, that the author would decidedly have encouraged intolerance in a magistrate: and since he enjoyed the chief confidence of the emperor^y, was his principal secretary, and commander of the prætorian guards, it is not improbable that he sometimes persuaded his master that the Christians deserved to be punished. Alexander does not appear to have left Rome till the year
- A. D. 229. 229, at which time he was not more than twenty-three years old; so that if the Christians in the capital were exposed partially to suffering in this early part of his reign, we may conceive that the emperor was not himself the mover of any such cruelties. According to the martyrologies, whose authority is very uncertain, the persecutions at Rome were carried on by Urbanus, who held the office of

^u Lampridius, 16, 26, 68. *Christianis*, p. 102.

^x Lactant. V. 11. See Bald-
uinus, *Edict. vet. princip. de*

^y Lamprid c. 31, 51. Dio, LXXX. 1. p. 1368.

prefect of the city. We shall see presently, that in other parts of the empire the Christians appear to have been unmolested: and it may be mentioned to the credit of Alexander, that he conducted himself kindly toward the Jews, and allowed them to have a governor of their own^z. We perhaps must not build too much upon the expression of an ancient writer^a, that no person was condemned during the reign of Alexander, but according to the usual course of law, and by judges of the strictest integrity. This may have been perfectly true; and yet Christians may have suffered, without it appearing to heathen magistrates that the usual course of law was violated.

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^z Origen. *Epist. ad Africanum*. Lamprid. c. 22.

^a Herodian. VI. p. 575, 588.

LECTURE XXIV.

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I HAVE stated, that Alexander did not leave Rome till the year 229. War had broken out with Persia in the year preceding, and he now set out to invade that country. His mother Mammæa accompanied him, and Antioch was the place appointed for the forces to assemble. It may perhaps have been on this occasion, and not in 218, as I have before stated^a, that she sent for Origen to come and discourse with her upon religion. The present was an eventful year in the life of Origen. He had now been nearly eleven years pursuing his studies and professional labours in Alexandria. These were no longer confined to oral teaching; but he had commenced those commentaries upon the Scriptures, the magnitude and extent of which give us such a stupendous idea of his mental powers. His works are said to have amounted to six thousand volumes; and even if we understand this expression of books or parts into which his works were divided, the number is still almost incredible. He began his commentaries upon the Scriptures early in the reign of Alexander, when he was about forty years old: and we may learn something of the rate at which he worked, when we find that in the seventh year of

^a Page 273.

that emperor he had written eight out of the twelve books of his commentary upon Genesis; a commentary upon the twenty-five first Psalms; another on the Lamentations; and the five first books of his commentary on St. John's Gospel. He had also composed two books on the Resurrection; a miscellaneous work in ten parts, entitled *Stromates*; and another in four books *concerning Principles*, which has led to great discussions as to the soundness of his opinions. He appears to have written all these works before he left Alexandria in 229; and Eusebius has given us an interesting account of the manner in which his commentaries were composed. Seven shorthand writers relieved each other by turns, and attended upon him while he dictated. The same number of persons was employed to make fair copies of what had been thus hastily written; and there were also some girls who had been specially taught to write a good hand. The expense of this numerous attendance was supplied by his friend Ambrosius, who not only encouraged him to compose these voluminous commentaries, but enabled him to publish them to the world^b. The loss of so many of these books is undoubtedly a subject of regret to the biblical student and to Christian literature in general: but at the same time it must be remembered that Origen carried to an unpardonable length the system of allegorizing the Scriptures^c. It is unjust and

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^b Eus. *II. E.* VI. 23. Suidas voc. *Origen*. Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

^c See Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. sæc.* III. §. 28. *Traité du sens literal et du*

sens mystique des saintes écritures, selon la doctrine des Pères. Paris, 1727. Huetius, *Origenian.* lib. II. quæst. 13. Præf. ad vol. II. op. Origen. ed. Benedict.

A. D. 229. wholly incorrect to speak of him as the first to introduce this custom. We find it in the writings of Philo, who spoke the sentiments of the Alexandrian Jews of his own time ; and we learn from him, that it had been adopted by the Egyptian Therapeutæ. We can trace it to a considerable extent in the works of Clement, who certainly taught it, and had probably himself learnt it, in the Christian schools of Alexandria. All these persons thought themselves at liberty to extract a secondary, and generally a mystical or spiritual sense from the plain letter of Scripture, though they by no means intended to deny its primary and historical meaning. Origen carried this principle to a much greater length, and would seem in some instances to have discarded the literal meaning altogether. He also employed this secondary or allegorical sense of Scripture, not only for interpretations connected immediately with Christianity, but to shew that many of the principles of philosophy were to be found in the Bible. It is highly probable that he had learnt this dangerous system in the school of Ammonius. The later Platonists were fond of explaining the theology of the earlier Grecian poets in this way ; and the Alexandrian Jews, as I have already mentioned, imitated the heathen in allegorizing their sacred writings. Origen caught the infection, as was not unnatural, from both these sources : and his fondness for it may be thought from this time to have had some effect upon the circumstances of his life.

The departure of Origen from Alexandria was the cause, if not the consequence, of some unpleasant circumstances between him and the bishop of the see, which have never been sufficiently ex-

plained^d. We have seen that Demetrius complained of Origen being allowed, while a layman, to teach in the church at Cæsarea : but at the same time he recalled him to Alexandria ; and it was at the bishop's special exhortation that Origen continued his labours in the catechetical school. This would hardly have been the case, if Demetrius had at that time felt jealous of Origen ; but it cannot be doubted that he was subsequently actuated by some such feeling. Origen however may have quitted the city from motives of his own ; and it was highly creditable to him, if he was invited into Greece, as two writers^e have asserted, that he might assist in repressing some heresies, which had appeared lately in Achaia. On his way into Greece he passed through Palestine, and stopped as before at Cæsarea. He was here ordained presbyter by Theoctistus ; and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, as well as other bishops, appear to have been present^f. His age was about forty-five ; and we might wish to know, why he had put off his ordination so long : but it is perhaps still more strange, that he was ordained at Cæsarea by foreign bishops, rather than at Alexandria by Demetrius. I can hardly think that such a step was unpremeditated, when he set out for Greece ; and the conduct of Demetrius might rather lead us to conclude, that something unpleasant had passed between them before. Eusebius says expressly that

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^d Mosheim has a long discussion upon the subject, but has not cleared up the obscurity. *De Rebus ante Const. sæc.* III. §. 30.

^e Hieron. *Catal. Script.* Ru-

fin. *H. E.* VI. 23. Prædestinatus, c. 37. says that the Valensian heretics were condemned by a council held in Achaia. It may have been at this time.

^f Eus. *H. E.* VI. 8. 23.

A. D. 229. Demetrius after this time became jealous of Origen^g. His reception had probably been very flattering in Palestine, and wherever he went, his fame had preceded him: but it was as a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, that Demetrius objected to his ordination^h. He wrote to the bishops in various parts of the world: and the two bishops of Cæsarea and Jerusalem were accused of irregularity in what they had done. Alexander appears to have defended himself in writing, and to have pleaded that Demetrius had himself furnished Origen with a commendatory letter at the time of his leaving Alexandriaⁱ: but I must again regret that we have so few materials for forming any judgment upon this matter.

Origen continued his journey from Palestine, and went into Greece. I have mentioned, that he was invited thither to assist in repressing some heresies; and there is evidence of his having passed some time at Athens. It is not improbable, that his friend Ambrosius may have been residing there at this time^k: but his quarrel with Demetrius was now beginning to take a more serious turn; and the unsoundness of some of his opinions became a subject of general discussion. His work concerning Principles was perhaps a great cause of these suspi-

^g l. c. it is repeated by Jerom. *Epist.* XXXIII. 4. p. 152.

^h Circa an. 206. Origenes corpus suum eviraverat, v. Eus. *H. E.* VI. 8. Demetrius at first approved of the deed; but he perhaps thought that it incapacitated him for taking orders; and we know, that persons who made themselves eunuchs, were afterwards de-

clared incapable of ordination. Bingham, IV. 3. 9.

ⁱ Hieron. *Catal. Script.* Alexand. et Origen.

^k Huetius, *Origenian.* I. 2. 10. who quotes Jerom, *Epist.* XVIII. *ad Marcellam.* (*Epist.* XLIII. 1. p. 190.) which proves that Ambrosius wrote to Origen from Athens.

cions : and the conduct of Demetrius would appear much less invidious, if we could think that his present dislike to Origen was owing to matters of doctrine. But there was another work, beside that upon Principles, which brought its author into some trouble ; and while he was at Athens, he was asked by some Christians in Palestine to furnish them with an authentic copy of a Dialogue or Dispute which he had held with Candidus, a Valentinian¹. The work was supposed to contain some heretical opinions, and Origen himself informs us, that it had been interpolated. He however sent a copy : and it seems most likely, that his friends in Palestine were for the present satisfied.

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It has been supposed, that nearly two years were consumed in his journey and his residence in Greece, and that he returned to Alexandria about the year 231. In the mean time the affairs of the Christians were probably prosperous in most parts of the world. The emperor, as we have seen, was not inclined to molest them ; and though Baronius asserts that Urbanus, bishop of Rome, suffered martyrdom, he rests it, as usual, upon very little evidence. The death of Urbanus, and the accession of Pontianus, may perhaps be placed in the year 230 ; which was also marked by the return of the emperor to Rome, and the celebration of his triumph for his victories in Persia. He did not however continue long in his capital, but returned again to the east, and passed two or three years at Antioch, where there had also been lately a change in the see, and Philetus had been succeeded by Zebinus^m.

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¹ Rufinus de *Adult. lib. Orig.* Hieron. *adv. Rufin.* II. 18.
p. 51. inter op. Orig. vol. IV. ^m Jerom mentions Geminus,

A. D. After what we have seen of the rising jealousy
 231. between Demetrius and Origen, it may be thought
 rather strange that the latter should have returned
 to Alexandria; unless we suppose that he wished
 to face his accusers, and that feeling himself inno-
 cent he went, as was most natural, to the place of
 his early associations. It is certain, however, (and
 this part of his history requires most explanation,)
 that his principal opponents were found in his native
 city; and though he seems to have met with a
 favourable reception in almost every other place, he
 was not able to remain in Alexandria. A meeting
 of bishops and presbyters, which was held soon after
 his return, decided that he was no longer to teach,
 and that he was to leave the cityⁿ: though we are
 not informed, whether the charge against him re-
 lated to his heresy or to the irregularity of his ordi-
 nation. He perhaps complied with the terms of this
 sentence before it was actually passed; and some
 time in the year 231 he finally quitted Alexandria^o.
 Demetrius however was still not satisfied: he called
 another meeting of Egyptian bishops; and a sen-
 tence was pronounced against Origen, which not
 only put him out of communion, but even degraded
 him from his office of presbyter. It is difficult to
 conceive that such measures were not coupled with
 some suspicion at least of heretical opinions. We
 gather from his own words^p, that his boldness in
 allegorizing the Scriptures had raised against him

or Germinianus, who published
 some works while Zebinus was
 bishop of Antioch. *Catal.*
Script. c. 64.

ⁿ Phot. *cod.* 118, who quotes
 Pamphilus.

^o He speaks of this in the
 sixth book of his commentary
 on John, vol. IV. p. 101.

^p Hom. XIII. in Gen. §. 3.
 vol. II. p. 95. Hom. VII. in
 Levit. §. 4. p. 223.

many calumnies and persecutions: and since, in a letter which he wrote to some friends at Alexandria, he complains of the interpolation and adulteration of his works^q, we may conclude that his writings had some share in raising against him his present persecution. The question of his orthodoxy or heterodoxy led to many and bitter controversies in later times. His doctrines have been publicly condemned by popes and councils, and the church of Rome even now takes part against him. The question is too intricate to be discussed in this place; and charity should at least require us to suspend our judgment, till more of his works are brought to light. Those which have survived have inclined men of great learning and the soundest piety to acquit him^r: and we may state, as a matter of history, that an admiration of Origen was not considered unsafe till the time of Jerom, that is, till the end of the fourth century. Eusebius and Pamphilus wrote a defence of him, which I shall mention in its proper place; and other persons stepped forward in its vindication. He was certainly looked upon with suspicion by the bishop and clergy of his own church; but we have seen that he was not without friends and supporters in other parts of the world. Demetrius had succeeded in persuading some foreign churches to join in condemning him; which he seems to have done by writing letters containing charges against him^s. There was a meeting held at Rome, of which we do not know the result: but the churches of Pa-

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^q Hieron. in Rufin. II. 18. IV. p. 322. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 266.
p. 509. vol. II.

^r See Bull, *Def. Fid. Nic.* II. ^s Origen. in Joan. tom. VI.
9. 22. Waterland's Works, vol. p. 101.

A. D. 231. lestine, Phœnicia, Arabia, and Achaia still took his part: and the bishops of Cæsarea and Jerusalem continued to shew him the same kindness which he had already received from them. Cæsarea now became his principal residence. He resumed his literary labours with the same ardour as before; and persons from all parts were attracted by his celebrity as a teacher.

His place in the Alexandrian school appears to have been occupied, as before, by Heraclas, who was in every way worthy to succeed him: and there is no sufficient evidence that Heraclas joined in any of the measures which had been taken against his master^t. His own fame had by this time become widely spread: and it was probably earlier than this, that Africanus had gone to Alexandria for the purpose of seeing him. He spoke in one of his own works of having been attracted by the fame of Heraclas^u: and since he was also a friend of Origen, the acquaintance probably began before the latter left Alexandria, and while he was assisted in the school by Heraclas. Africanus was a Christian writer of some celebrity, though only a few fragments of his works have survived. The most important was a chronological history, which was brought down to his own times; and which is supposed to have been of great use to Eusebius in composing his Chronicle. It would be pleasing to know, that Origen, who corresponded with Africanus^x after this

^t See Huetius, *Origenian*. I. 2. 15, and the note of the Benedictine editor. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 360.

^u Eus. *H. E.* VI. 31. Con-

cerning Africanus, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 32.

^x See the first volume of Origen's works, *init.*

period, also kept up a friendly intercourse with Heraclas; but there is nothing which connects Origen with Alexandria after his departure from it in 231: and it was perhaps in the following year, or not much later, that Heraclas was himself raised to the bishopric of Alexandria upon the death of Demetrius. His successor in the catechetical school was Dionysius, who had also been a pupil of Origen, and was a man of good family, as well as of great learning.

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The history of the catechetical school, if the details of it had been preserved, would have been particularly interesting at this period. It was now, that a new kind of philosophy was rising into notice, which soon threw all others into the shade, and which in its origin and progress had an immediate connexion with the Gospel. This was known by the name of the eclectic, from being selected or compounded from the tenets of various schools: and it seems to have arisen, or at least to have received new life, at Alexandria, in the early part of the third century. We have already seen symptoms of philosophy taking this turn. Gnosticism was in fact an eclectic system, though of a most extravagant kind: and in order to produce it, the Persian doctrines, Judaism, and even the Gospel, were engrafted upon a basis of Platonism. I have stated that many Christian writers, before their conversion, had studied the philosophy of Plato; and their train of thoughts had often a Platonic cast, even when they were explaining doctrines, which were directly opposed to Platonism. This was likely to be particularly the case in Alexandria; and the teachers in the catechetical school could hardly discharge their duties,

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if they were not intimately acquainted with the writings of Plato. This intimacy is abundantly seen in the works of Clement and Origen: and though the former does not appear to have been brought into any trouble for his opinions, it is not improbable that Origen may have made himself enemies by shewing too great a fondness for the heathen philosophers. Demetrius and Heraclas have left no writings, by which we can judge of their style and habit of thinking: but Dionysius, who succeeded the latter both in the school and in the see, is certainly much less Platonic in his writings than Clement or Origen. We perhaps ought not to indulge in historical speculations, where we are left almost entirely to conjecture; but the ejection of Origen from Alexandria seems to have formed a kind of epoch in the literature of that city. Up to this period, the Christian writers were fond of clothing their thoughts in the language and imagery of Plato; but we observe this fondness much less frequently afterwards: and an event had taken place in the Alexandrian philosophy, which makes this period one of great importance in ecclesiastical history.

I allude to the school of the later Platonists, as it is generally called, which was founded at the beginning of the third century by Ammonius Saccas. It seems certain that he was born of Christian parents at Alexandria, and that he received instruction in the catechetical school. He was probably old enough to have heard Pantænus and Clement, and he continued in Alexandria long after the school had been committed to the care of Origen: but since Origen is said himself to have been a hearer of

Ammonius^y, we must conclude that the latter was superior in age; and both of them were probably attracting many followers at the same time. It has been much disputed, whether Ammonius continued always in the Christian faith, or whether he fell into heathenism. His lapse was denied by Eusebius, who has been followed by Jerom and many moderns: but since it was expressly asserted by Porphyry, who not only lived before Eusebius, but was a pupil of Plotinus, who was himself a pupil of Ammonius, we have at least authority on our side, if we say that Ammonius abandoned the Christian faith. Upon the whole I cannot help following those writers^z who have come to this conclusion: and it is not improbable that Eusebius confounded Ammonius Saccas with another Alexandrian of the same name, who lived about the same period, and who left, among other works, a Diatessaron, or a scheme for harmonizing the four Gospels^a. We have seen, that something of the same kind had been undertaken by Tatian in the third century. Ammonius appears to have taken the Gospel of St. Matthew for his basis, and to have applied to this the parallel passages from the three other Evangelists^b: a plan, which was of use to Eusebius himself, when he composed his ten canons upon this subject; but the work of Ammo-

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^y Porphyry. apud Eus. VI. an. 211. vol. III. p. 20.

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^z I would refer particularly to Mosheim *de turbata per Platonicos Ecclesia*, §. 7, *de Rebus ante Const.* cent. II. §. 27. Brucker, *Hist. Philos.* vol. II. p. 205. Orsi, *Istor. Eccles.*

^a Jerom, *Catal. Script. Victor Capuan. pref.* The difference between these two persons is shewn by Fabricius, *Bibl. Gr.* vol. IV. p. 172. Lardner, vol. II. p. 438.

^b Eus. *Epist. ad Carpianum.*

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nianus has long since been lost, and nothing more is known concerning his history. It is certain, that his namesake Ammonius Saccas left no writings of this kind behind him^c; and we cannot ascertain the period at which he ceased to be a Christian: but the progress of error was probably gradual; and even to the last he did not so much abjure Christianity, as endeavour to make it accord with the philosophy of Plato. It was this love of harmonizing different systems which placed him at the head of a particular school. The Christians had taken advantage of the differences which existed in heathenism; and the first attempt of Ammonius was to bring the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies into agreement^d. He next proceeded to blend his new compound with Christianity; and he met with a success, which, even to a late period, was extremely injurious to the Gospel.

Ammonius was not the only person to blame in the formation of this unholy union. It is to be feared that the Christians had for a long time been weak enough to defend their tenets, by shewing that they were not so much at variance with those of the heathen philosophers. It was a favourite position with them, (and in this they were supported by the Alexandrian Jews,) that Plato and others had taken some of their ideas from the writings of Moses. The opponents of Christianity had not sufficient critical knowledge to refute this error: but they met it by the forgery of writings, which professed to be older, not only than the time of Plato, but of Moses. Ammonius improved upon

^c Longinus, *apud Porphy.*
Vit. Plotin. p. 14. ed. Basil.

^d Hierocles, *de Fato*, *apud*
Phot. cod. CCXIV.

this device by shewing that there was no real difference between the various systems of heathen philosophy; and since they had all agreed from the beginning, it was more probable, as he argued, that Moses was indebted to them, than that Plato had borrowed from Moses. He then proceeded to shew, that the leading doctrines of Christianity were to be found in the writings of Plato: and here also the Christians in an evil hour had furnished him with weapons, which he turned against themselves. I have observed, when speaking of Justin Martyr, that he explained the mysterious doctrines of Christianity in the language of Plato; and the teachers in the catechetical school of Alexandria, some of whom had really been Platonists before their conversion, appealed directly to the writings of Plato, as proving the antiquity of the Gospel. They did this upon the assumption that Plato had borrowed from Moses; but Ammonius retorted the argument against them, by contending that the Christians had borrowed and corrupted the doctrines of Plato. It is not easy to account for this defection to heathenism on the part of Ammonius. We perhaps need not look for any other reason than his desire to place himself at the head of a party: and though the fact is not stated, a jealousy of Origen may perhaps have had some share in producing this effect. Origen, as we have seen, had presided over the catechetical school, with some little interruptions, from the year 203 to 231; and this was exactly the period during which Ammonius was perfecting his eclectic system. Even if it had not been expressly stated, we might have inferred that two such celebrated teachers, living in the same

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city, must have been personally known to each other: and if we knew more of this acquaintance, some light might perhaps be thrown upon the departure of Origen from Alexandria. It is certain, that suspicions were entertained as to the soundness of his opinions: and if the bishop was aware, as he could hardly fail to be, of the new school which was now rising into notice, he may perhaps have thought that Origen approached too nearly to the system of Ammonius^c. Whoever has studied the writings of the later Platonists, will know that Origen and Ammonius may have used similar language, though with very different objects. Both of them in fact perverted the words and the meaning of Plato. Thus it was said by both of them, that the divinity of the Logos, or Son of God, and the doctrine of the Trinity, were to be found in the writings of Plato. The Christians, who were followed by Origen, had asserted this in the hope of removing objections to the novelty of the Gospel: and Ammonius saw the advantage of adopting such a notion, when he was proving the Gospel to be merely a corruption of Platonism.

Though this unintentional compromise was productive of serious evil to Christianity, it furnishes, if rightly considered, a direct refutation of the charge, that the Gospel was corrupted by the Platonists. The passages, which have been brought to prove, that any thing like the Christian Trinity was held by Plato, have entirely failed to substantiate this point. Plato knew nothing of a second and third person distinct from the first Cause: and since this

^c See Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const.* sec. III. §. 27. p. 622.

doctrine was undoubtedly held by the Christians, they must have derived it from some other source, and not from Platonism. It must also have been notorious at the beginning of the third century, that the Christians believed in a Trinity, or Ammonius would not have seen the expediency of finding such a doctrine in the mystical phraseology of Plato. Such however was the fact. The later Platonists, as the followers of Ammonius were called, were the bitterest enemies of Christianity; but still they endeavoured to shew that it resembled Platonism. Ammonius had perhaps been building up this system for some years before the departure of Origen from Alexandria: but we know that he was lecturing there in 232, at which time Plotinus, who was then twenty-eight years old, became his hearer, and continued with him for eleven years. It ought also to be mentioned that Gnosticism, as well as Christianity, was affected by this new method of uniting philosophical opinions. Platonism, as taught by Ammonius, was in fact an improvement upon Gnosticism, and a much less irrational scheme for blending philosophy with the Gospel. The Gnostics, as well as the Christians, were treated with contempt by the later Platonists^f; and from this time we hear much less of the injury done to Christianity by Gnosticism.

If the foundation of this new school was in any degree the cause of Origen being driven from Alexandria^g, he appears at least to have cleared himself

^f A treatise written against the Gnostics by Plotinus is still extant: (Ennead. II. lib. 9.) and a much longer one was composed by Amelius.
^g I shall not say any thing of the story preserved by Epiphanius, (Hær. LXIV. 2.) that

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in the eyes of the Christians of Palestine ; and he was received, as I have already stated, at Cæsarea, of which place Theoctistus was still bishop. I have also mentioned, that he wrote a letter from hence to his friends at Alexandria, complaining of his treatment, and defending himself against Demetrius. His residence at Cæsarea seems to have gained for him, if possible, still greater celebrity than he had enjoyed at Alexandria. Persons came, as before, from distant countries to hear him ; and he possessed the art, not merely of astonishing them by his learning, but of attaching them as friends. It is now that we meet for the first time with the name of Firmilianus, a Cappadocian of good family, who came to Cæsarea for the benefit of Origen's instructions. He was bishop of a city of the same name in his own country ; and he not only repeated his visits to Origen, but invited him in turn to come and see him in Cappadocia. The Gospel was now firmly established in that country ; which is not surprising, when we recollect that there were Christians there before S. Peter's death^b ; and that in all probability it was visited by S. Paul. Alexander, the present bishop of Jerusalem, had been translated from another see in Cappadocia : and it was about this period, or perhaps earlier, that a council was held at Iconium, which became afterwards of some importance, and which proves the existence of a close intercourse between the churches of Asia Minorⁱ. It was attended by

Origen was obliged to leave Alexandria, because he had offered sacrifice. Huetius was inclined to believe it, (Origenian. I. 2. 13.) but it is abundantly refuted by the Bene-

dictine editor. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 354.

^b 1 Pet. i. 1.

ⁱ The council is mentioned by Dionysius, bishop of Alex-

fifty bishops from Phrygia, Galatia, Cilicia, and Cappadocia: and Firmilianus himself appears to have been present at it. The heresy of Montanus was the cause of it being assembled, some disputes having arisen as to whether baptisms administered by these heretics were to be considered valid^k. We have seen that a similar question had been decided in the negative, about the year 215, by a council held at Carthage: and the council of Iconium now came to the same conclusion. I have observed that these meetings of bishops from distant countries always indicate a season of peace: and as we advance in the century, the history of Firmilianus will shew still farther that Christians were in communication with each other through the whole civilized world. Firmilianus speaks, some years later, of annual meetings being held in his own province, that the heads and governors of the churches might agree in their decision upon any cases of importance^l. The bishops of Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria appear to have corresponded with each other, and with Firmilianus of Cappadocia, as frequently as if they had lived in the same province; and even modern facility of intercourse could not have brought the Christians of Europe and Asia into closer contact than they were in the third century.

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We know the names of two other persons, who were attracted to Cæsarea by the celebrity of Origen. These were two brothers, natives of Pontus, Athe-

andria, (*apud Eus.* VII. 7.) IV. p. 646. The latter places
and Firmilianus, (*inter op.* it in 231.
Cyp. Ep. LXXV. p. 145. 149.) ^k This is said by Firmilianus,
For its date see Valesius ad l. c. p. 149.
Eus. l. c. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, ^l l. c. p. 143, 144.
tom. II. part. 3. p. 73. tom.

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nodorus and Theodorus; the latter of whom became much the most distinguished under the name of Gregory; and in later times he received the additional title of Thaumaturgus, from the greatness of his miracles. He was of a good family, and brought up in heathenism; but losing his father at the age of fourteen, he became imperfectly acquainted with Christianity; and an accident having brought him and his brother to Cæsarea, they were so charmed with Origen's method of teaching, that they continued with him five years, and were instructed by him not only in the Gospel, but in the whole range of philosophy and literature^m. Origen in the mean time was continuing his laborious task of commenting on the Scriptures. He also went to Jerusalem to see the places which are connected with the history of Jesusⁿ: and while he was at Cæsarea he made great progress in the commentary upon Isaiah and Ezekiel. There was perhaps no period of his life which was passed in more uninterrupted application to his favourite studies and pursuits: and it is plain that the church at large had for some years been enjoying rest from persecution. There had in fact been no systematic molestation of the Christians, countenanced by authority, since the death of the emperor Severus in 211. Elagabalus perhaps gave them some trouble during his short reign: but his successor Alexander was rather inclined to favour them: and twenty years of peace could not fail to be prosperous to the affairs of the increasing sect. It had in fact almost ceased to deserve the appella-

^m The most authentic materials for the life of Gregory are found in his panegyrical

oration upon Origen.

ⁿ In Joann. tom. VI. 24.

tion of a sect: and if we had any means of judging of the comparative numbers of the Christians and the heathen, we should perhaps find that the Christians were gaining ground almost daily upon their opponents. Every city in every province of the empire seems to have had its congregation and its bishop: countries comparatively barbarous contained many converts: and if we may judge from the works of literature which remain, the Christian writers were at least fully equal, both in numbers and in worth, to their heathen contemporaries. Whatever may be said of Origen's faults, the vast extent of his learning, and the multiplicity of his writings, leave him without a rival in the century in which he lived. Christianity even produced a change in the whole character and spirit of heathen philosophy. If the later Platonists had not formed themselves into a school, the victory which was achieved in the time of Constantine, was already won at the beginning of the third century. Platonism must either have changed its fundamental principles, or Christianity must have triumphed: and unfortunately the Platonists were allowed to turn against the Gospel the very weapons which the Gospel had supplied. This prolonged the struggle for nearly another century: and we are now arrived at a period, when the Christians were exposed to other enemies than the philosophers of the Alexandrian school.

The emperor Alexander came to Rome from Antioch in 233, having heard of an invasion of the Germans. In the following year he marched against them; and in 235 he and his mother Mammæa were put to death at Moguntia, or Mentz. The author of the conspiracy was Maximinus, a Thracian

A. D.
231.A. D.
235.

A. D.
235.

by birth, who about thirty years before had been taken into the army by the emperor Severus on account of his gigantic strength. In every sense of the term he was a barbarian: but his military prowess won the favour of the soldiers; and when the army was assembled on the Rhine for the German campaign, he found them much more willing to serve under himself, than under the less experienced and perhaps effeminate Alexander. When the latter was put to death, Maximinus was declared emperor, and a reign of terror may then be said to have begun. The first care of Maximinus was to kill all the persons, who had been attached to his predecessor; and it was calculated that as many as 4000 met their death in this way. Eusebius^o adds the interesting fact, that there were several Christians in the imperial household, who suffered among the rest: and though Maximinus might have been expected to care little about religion^p, it is certain that the beginning of his reign was marked by a special persecution against the Christians^q. He is said to have aimed his measures particularly at the heads of the church; and the scheme seems to have been so well imagined, and the execution so immediate, that we must trace it to some persons of more calculation and contrivance than the savage who was now on the throne. He was perhaps pleased to have the number of victims increased, and the more so if he was persuaded that the Christians were attached to his predecessor: but he probably

^o H. E. VI. 28.

^p This is expressly said by Herodian. VII.

^q It is reckoned the seventh

by some writers. Eusebius, Augustin, and Orosius call it the sixth.

knew little of any difference of creeds; and the persecution may be ascribed, in the first instance, to other persons rather than to himself. We may be sure, that there were many who had long watched the rising sect with jealousy and hatred. The favours which they had received from Alexander and his mother, must have greatly displeased all real supporters of the old religion: and if we knew more of the plot, which raised Maximinus to the throne, we should probably find that a wish to suppress Christianity was one of the causes which led to the death of Alexander. When the deed was perpetrated, it was perhaps politic to strike a terror into the Christians, who might otherwise have been inclined to avenge the loss of their protector.

A. D.
235.

The persecution appears not to have been universal^r; but perhaps depended upon the feelings and inclination of each magistrate or governor. Maximinus himself did not visit Rome during any part of the three years that he held the empire: and if Pontianus, the bishop of that see, was put to death, as some writers have supposed^s, in the year 235, the emperor was perhaps not consulted; but Eusebius is express in placing his death at the beginning of the following reign^t. His successor, Anteros, held the see only one month, which perhaps confirms the statement adopted by Baronius, that he suffered martyrdom: and we know, that Vitalianus, who commanded the prætorian guards at Rome during this reign, was a man of singular cruelty^u: but

^r Erat enim transeundi facultas, eo quod persecutio illa non per totum mundum sed localis fuisset. *Firmiliani epist.* *inter op. Cyprian.* p. 146.
^s Baronius, Pagi, Orsi.
^t H. E. VI. 29. Chron.
^u Jul. Capitol. *Gordian.* 10.

A. D. 235. though these two deaths, following so close upon each other, might seem to shew that the present persecution was felt with some violence at Rome, the uncertainty of dates is too great to allow us to receive it as an historical fact: and the Romans were too much occupied in creating and deposing emperors, to think much of matters of religion.

There can be no doubt that the Christians in the East suffered severely, and some particulars have been preserved to us, relating to Cappadocia and Palestine. One writer^x has asserted, that Origen was the chief cause of the persecution excited by Maximinus: and though the authority is slight, the remark may be so far true, that the great fame of Origen had contributed to raise in the heathen a desire to exterminate the Christians. Origen was himself a sufferer; and for a while he was obliged to withdraw from his literary retreat at Cæsarea. His two pupils, Athenodorus and Theodorus, left him, and went to Alexandria; from which we may perhaps infer that Egypt was one of the countries which was not visited by persecution: and in Alexandria the two brothers would have the advantage of hearing lectures from Dionysius^y. Origen now availed himself of the invitation which Firmilianus had given him to go and see him in his own country. Firmilianus was bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; and at first it was perhaps safer to reside there than in Palestine. But Origen soon

^x Orosius, VII. 19.

^y Nicéphorus mentions Athenodorus as successor of Dionysius in the catechetical school. *II. E. V.* 18. Dionysius was

made bishop in 246 or 247, but since Nicéphorus meant the brother of Theodorus, he was probably mistaken.

found, that the storm followed him. This part of Asia Minor had lately been visited by tremendous earthquakes, which swallowed up whole cities^z; and the calamity, as usual, was attributed to the Christians. Serenianus was now the governor of Cappadocia: and Firmilianus describing this period after a lapse of twenty years, speaks of him as a persecutor of singular severity. It is remarkable, however, that in the midst of these troubles the heresy of Montanus made some progress in that part of Asia. A female of that persuasion had the good fortune to have predicted the earthquake: and the completion of her prophecy confirmed the pretensions to inspiration, which were made by the Montanists. Origen, in the mean time, was enabled to save himself by the kindness of a female named Juliana, who lived at Cæsarea, and who afforded him for two years an asylum in her house^a. She also supplied him with the use of a library: and the greatest of all his literary works was perhaps carried on with much activity during these two years' retirement in Cappadocia.

A. D.
235.

I allude to his laborious edition of the Septuagint. The text of that version had become extremely unsettled. The Jews were accused of having purposely altered it; and the mere errors of transcribers, during a period of 400 years, could not fail to have introduced many variations. Origen undertook to publish a more correct edition of it; or rather to bring together all the known translations which had been made of the Old Testament into Greek.

^z Firmilian. *l. c.* Origen. in Mat. tr. XXVIII. §. 39. p. 857. ^a Palladius, *Lausiac. c.* 51. See also Eus. *II. E. VI.* 17. Jul. Capitol. *Gordian. tert.* 26.

A. D.
235.

I have already mentioned the versions of Aquila and Theodotion, which were made in the course of the second century: and the library of Juliana furnished Origen with a third, which had been made by Symmachus about the year 202^b. Symmachus is said to have been a Samaritan, who afterwards became a Jew^c, though Eusebius and Jerom call him an Ebionite. According to the latter his version was by no means literal: but the copy used by Origen possessed the peculiar interest of having been presented to Juliana by Symmachus himself. Origen appears at first to have published the three versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, together with the Septuagint: they were arranged in four parallel columns, and the work was called Tetrapla: but he afterwards added two other columns, one of which contained the original Hebrew text, and the other the same Hebrew text in Greek characters. The work, when thus expanded into six columns, was called Hexapla: but Origen's labours did not end here; and having succeeded in finding two other Greek translations, he added them to the rest; and thus the whole was arranged in eight columns, and was published with the name of Octapla. Little is known of these two anonymous translations, except that they appear to have been made by Jews^d, and that one was found at Jericho in the reign of Caracalla, and the other at Nicopolis in Epirus, in the reign of Alexander^e. These ver-

^b Chron. Alex. See Ittigius, *Hist. Eccles. Sac. II. Scil. Cap. I.* 60. Tillemont thinks it was made before the version of Theodotion, in the reign of M. Aurelius. *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 334.

^c Epiphan. *de Mens. et Pond.* p. 172.

^d Hieron. *adv. Rufin.* II. 34. vol. II. p. 528.

^e Epiphan. *de Mens. et Pond.* 18. Pseudo-Athanas. *Synops.*

sions were known by the name of the fifth and sixth; and the industry of Origen discovered part of a seventh, which comprehended only the Psalms. His object was not merely to exhibit these various translations in parallel columns, but to employ the whole as a critical apparatus for correcting the text of the Septuagint. The pains, which he took in comparing them with each other and with the Hebrew, place him in the first rank of critical editors; and if the work had come down to us entire, instead of being preserved in only a few fragments, it would not only have been the most important biblical work ever undertaken, but would have assisted us materially in interpreting the Scriptures^f.

A. D.
235.

Origen had perhaps been preparing this edition for some years; but if he published nothing of it before the Tetrapla, he could not have finished this till he met with the version of Symmachus at Cæsarea in Cappadocia. The Hexapla and Octapla were perhaps not published till a much later period: and the tradition is worthy of credit, which says that the whole work occupied twenty-eight years of his life. It was about the time of his leaving Palestine and taking refuge in Cappadocia, that he wrote another work, which is still extant, on the subject of martyrdom. It was addressed to his friend Ambrosius, and to Protocletus, a presbyter of the church of Cæsarea, both of whom were now in prison. The sufferings of the Christians at this time appear to have been very great; and so they probably continued during the whole of the reign of Max-

^f See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 142.

- A. D. 237. iminus, which fortunately was not a long one. An attempt was made against his authority in 237, which was not successful. Gordian, who was proconsul of Africa, was declared emperor ; but he was obliged soon after to destroy himself ; and his son lost his life at the same time. The senate, however, was determined that the empire should no longer be disgraced by Maximinus. He was declared a public enemy, and several of his supporters were put to death. The title of emperor was then given to Pupienus and Balbinus, and that of Cæsar to Gordian, who was grandson of the proconsul of Africa. He was now only in his fifteenth year, but he succeeded in getting the better of his rivals ; and in 238 Maximinus was killed by the soldiers, together with his son Maximus. There is reason to think that this event put an end for a time to the sufferings of the Christians ; and those who had been banished or imprisoned, were able to return to their homes.
- A. D. 238.

LECTURE XXV.

THE reign of Gordian, which was on the whole
advantageous to the empire, appears also to
have been a period of tranquillity to the Christians.
The exiles, as I have mentioned, returned to their
homes: and, among the rest, Origen quitted his re-
treat in Cappadocia, and went for the second time
into Greece. He paid a visit to his friend Ambro-
sius, who, after his release from prison, was living
at Nicomedia^a, and from thence he went to Athens.
He perhaps stayed there as much as a year, since he
now completed his commentary on Ezekiel, and
wrote five out of the ten books of his commentary
on the Song of Solomon. He seems also to have
finished his commentary on St. John about this time,
which consisted of thirty-four books. We may place
his return to Cæsarea in Palestine about the year
239; and his former pupil Theodorus (or, as we
may call him henceforward, Gregory) appears to
have joined him shortly after. It is probable that
the latter soon returned to his native country Pon-
tus, where he received ordination, and was ap-
pointed bishop of Neocæsarea: but before he left
Palestine, he delivered a public oration in praise of
Origen, which is still extant. The celebrity of his

A. D.
233.

A. D.
239

^a He wrote from hence the letter to Africanus, which is still
extant. *Op.* vol. I.

A. D.
239.

character appears to have pointed him out for this station: and if we may believe the accounts which were circulated in the fourth century, he distinguished himself still farther by working the most stupendous miracles. The life, which was written of him by his namesake Gregory of Nyssa, would leave no room for doubt, that miraculous powers were exhibited to an extraordinary degree in the third century: but it is impossible not to question the accuracy of his biographer in this particular. Eusebius, who lived much nearer to the time, does not give to Gregory the name of Thaumaturgus, nor does he say a word concerning the miracles which he worked; and we are perhaps to conclude, either that the life of him was written by some author later than Gregory of Nyssa, or that the latter paid too much attention to fabulous inventions^b.

It is more interesting to know, that the bishop of Neocæsarea erected a handsome church, which was observed to remain unhurt, when so many public buildings were thrown down by earthquakes. I have spoken of the uncertainty concerning the first erection of churches in Rome; and there is little authentic information concerning the time when the Christians began to build them in any country: but if they had not ventured upon this step before, there is good reason to think that they did so in the long interval of peace, which followed the death of Septimius Severus. There is positive evidence that the persecution in Cappadocia had been the cause of

^b The miracles of Gregory are mentioned by Rufinus, Jerome, Theodoret, and Socrates: but the earliest of these writers did not flourish till the end of the fourth century.

some churches being burnt by the heathen^c: and though the church erected by Gregory may have been remarkable for its appearance, he was probably by no means the first bishop who was able to assemble his flock in a building erected for the purpose.

A. D.
239.

That the reign of Gordian was a period of tranquillity to the Christians, may be inferred from the meetings which were held in various parts of the world for the suppression of heresy. In the year 240, or not long after, a council of ninety bishops was held at Carthage, which passed a sentence of condemnation upon Privatus. He was charged with many and grievous offences, and some years afterwards he was spoken of as an heretic^d, but the particular nature of his heresy has not been mentioned. Donatus was at this time bishop of Carthage, who took an active part in rebuking Privatus: and we have proof of the intercourse between different churches, when we find that Fabianus, bishop of Rome, expressed himself strongly by a letter upon the same subject. I have already mentioned the uncertainty concerning the death of Anteros, the predecessor of Fabianus; some writers placing it in 235, while Eusebius speaks of it as subsequent to the death of Maximinus in 238. In whatever year it happened, Fabianus succeeded to the bishopric of Rome; and the event had certainly taken place, when the council of Carthage passed sentence upon Privatus. According to Eusebius^e, the vacant see

A. D.
240.

^c Origen. *in Mat.* tract. XXVIII. §. 39. p. 857.

^d Cyprian. Ep. 55. p. 84.

^e *H. E.* VI. 29. Rufinus

says that the election of Zephyrinus was attributed by some persons to the same circumstance. *H. E.* VI. 21.

A. D. 240. was conferred upon Fabianus, in consequence of a dove having rested upon him while a meeting was held for the election of a bishop.

Another synod was held at Bostra in Arabia on account of some heretical opinions which had been maintained by Beryllus. This person was bishop of Bostra, and his writings obtained him some celebrity^f: but unfortunately he fell into the errors, which were brought into greater notice a few years later by Sabellius. I have spoken of Praxeas, who had disseminated these opinions at the end of the second century, and was refuted by Tertullian. Praxeas was certainly at Rome, and there is evidence of his having been also in Asia, if not in Africa: but we have no means of connecting him directly with the revival of his heresy in Arabia. We read however of the same, or similar sentiments being held by Noetus: and a work is still extant, which was written against the latter by Hippolytus, whom I have already mentioned as being probably a bishop in Arabia. This might perhaps lead us to conclude that Noetus was also an inhabitant of that country, though he is represented as having been a native of Smyrna^g, or of Ephesus^h: and if Hippolytus was martyred in the year 235, as some writers have asserted, we must suppose Noetus to have flourished earlier than Beryllus. Noetus is saidⁱ to have revived the heresy, which had been first invented by Epigonus, and maintained afterwards by Cleomenes: but we know nothing of these heretics ex-

^f H. E. VI. 20.

^h Epiphan. Hær. LVII. 1.

^g Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* III.

p. 479.

3. Hippolyt. *cont. Noet.* I. vol. II. p. 5.

ⁱ Theodoret. *Hær. Fab.* III.

3.

cept their names: and we are able neither to connect them with Praxeas, nor to say whether Arabia was the scene of their heretical teaching. Noetus was summoned more than once before a council, which at length expelled him from the communion of the church^k: and if we might believe a writer of very uncertain authority^l, his sentence was pronounced by Tranquillus, bishop of Chalcedon in Syria. Callistus succeeded to his opinions, and propagated them after his death.

A. D.
240.

Beryllus, as I have stated, was bishop of Bostra, which was the metropolis of Arabia: and the synod was probably convened against him about the year 240. Many bishops had engaged him in disputation, but apparently without success: and there cannot be a greater proof of Origen's celebrity, than that he was called in to take part in this intricate discussion. We have seen that Origen, much earlier in his history^m, had been invited by an Arabian prince to give him instruction. He was therefore not altogether a stranger to the country, and Beryllus himself may have been personally known to him. Beryllus maintained that our Saviour had no distinct personal existence before his appearance upon earth, and that he had only the divinity, or a portion of the divinity, of the Father, residing in himself: and he seems to have thought, like the Arians in the following century, that Jesus Christ, when he was born into the world, did not receive a soul, like ordinary human beings, but that this di-

^k Hippol. *cont. Noet.* i. vol. II. p. 6.

^l *Prædestinat.* c. 36.

^m Page 260.

A. D. vine emanation held in him the place of a soulⁿ.
 240. This agrees in some points with what was afterwards called Sabellianism: and it is satisfactory to find, that Beryllus was convinced of his errors by Origen, and returned to the doctrine which was held by the church at large. A detailed account of this conference was extant in the time of Eusebius^o: and the words of this writer make it perfectly plain that Sabellianism was considered to be an error in the third century. We may add, that the distinct personality of the Son, and his preexistent divinity, were at this time essential articles of belief.

The remainder of the reign of Gordian furnishes no materials for the ecclesiastical historian; and
 A. D. after the year 241 the emperor must have been
 241. wholly occupied with the Persian war. It was in that year, that Sapor the king of Persia invaded the eastern frontier of the empire, and in the year following Gordian marched against him and defeated him^p. He did not however return home to enjoy his victories. Philip, who was by birth an Arabian, obtained the command of the prætorian guards in
 A. D. 243; and in the following year he was raised to a
 243. partnership in the empire: but he soon after repaid these favours by causing the death of his master on the confines of Persia. Being thus left sole emperor, he gave the title of Cæsar to his son Philip,

ⁿ See Socrat. *H. E.* III. 7. and Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const.* sæc. III. §. 34. p. 701.

^o *H. E.* VI. 33. Jerom also mentions the dialogue between Origen and Beryllus as extant. (*Catal. Script.*) Origen seems

to have alluded to the followers of Beryllus in his commentary upon the Epistle to Titus, as quoted by Pamphilus. See *Op.* vol. IV. p. 695.

^p Plotinus the Platonic philosopher accompanied the army.

and they proceeded together to Rome: but if we could believe some later writers, he had first given a most extraordinary proof of his attachment to Christianity. The anecdote, as told by Eusebius^q, simply states, that Philip wished to join the congregation in prayer upon Easter eve: but that the bishop would not admit him till he had made a confession of his sins, and had taken his station among the penitents; a condition, which was readily complied with by the emperor.

A. D.
243.

Eusebius mentions this merely as a rumour, and adds no circumstance either of time or place. Later writers^r make the bishop to have been Babylas, who succeeded Zebinus in the see of Antioch about the year 239^s: and if such a transaction really took place at Antioch, we must place it at the very beginning of Philip's reign, since he never afterwards visited the east. The story is however rejected by most modern authorities^t: and though the question of Philip's conversion to Christianity has given rise to voluminous discussions, I can say no more upon it in this place, than that those writers seem to argue with most probability, who conclude that Philip was at no time of his life a believer in the Gospel^u. It is possible, however, as

^q *H. E.* VI. 34.

^r Chron. Alex. an. 253. Chrysost. *de Babyla*, vol. I. p. 658. but the same story is told of the emperors Decius and Numerianus.

^s Eus. *H. E.* VI. 29.

^t There is a chronological difficulty, which I have not yet seen noticed. Eusebius makes the event to have happened on Easter eve; and Easter day fell

upon the fourteenth of April in 244: but Pagi has shewn that Gordian was alive as late as the twenty-fourth of April. It may however be said, that Philip had been admitted to a partnership in the empire before that time. See F. Spanheim, *Op. Var.* vol. II. p. 400.

^u His conversion is mentioned by Jerom, Orosius, Cassiodorus, Jornandes, Chron.

A. D. 243. was observed in the case of Alexander Severus, that a partial acquaintance with the Christians and their doctrines may have inclined him to be more tolerant than some of his predecessors; and his memory is not connected with any attempt at persecution. It is even said^x, that Origen addressed a letter to him, and another to his wife or mother Severa, which, if they were extant, would perhaps throw light upon the controverted question of Philip's Christianity: but the mere fact of his having received the letter is no proof that he agreed with Origen in religion. On the other hand, it has been satisfactorily shewn^y, that the secular games, which were celebrated for the ninth and last time in the year 247, were attended with all the solemnity and pageantries of heathen worship.

We know nothing of the cause which induced Origen to write a letter to the emperor; nor is there any evidence of their having come personally into contact. Philip appears to have been in Italy during nearly the whole of his reign, and Origen continued to reside at Cæsarea in Palestine. Once again about this period he was called into Arabia, and again he was successful in suppressing erroneous opinions. The question in dispute was of much less importance than the last: and the Christians in Arabia must have been enjoying considerable tranquillity, when a mere matter of speculation could lead to the assembling of a council. Some persons had main-

Alex. &c. The contrary is shewn by Kortholt. *de Persecut.* c. 8. §. 5. p. 307. Scaliger ad Eus. num. 2260. Many writers are mentioned by Fabricius, *Salut. Lux Evang.* p. 236.

Danz. *de Eus. Cæsar.* p. 139. See Spanheim. *de Christianismo Philippi.* Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. sæc.* III. §. 10.

^x Eus. *H. E.* VI. 36.

^y Pagi ad Baron. an. 249.

tained, that the soul perishes with the body, and that both will be restored to life at the general resurrection^z. The fundamentals of Christianity do not appear to have been affected by this question, which merely concerned the intermediate state of existence: but the persons assembled found it necessary once more to call in the assistance of Origen; which is perhaps the more remarkable, because he has himself been accused of holding erroneous opinions concerning the soul^a. It would seem, however, that his orthodoxy was not called in question by this Arabian synod; and he is stated to have persuaded the maintainers of this new opinion to reject it as unsound.

A. D.
247.

Another heresy, which appeared about this time, and which was also noticed by Origen^b, was that of the Helcesaites. They rejected several parts of the Bible, and among the rest the Epistles of St. Paul. They also maintained, that a man might deny his faith in the time of persecution, if he did not really renounce it in his heart: and we have seen, that this was a common principle among the Gnostics. There is in fact some reason to think, that the Helcesaites were Gnostics. I have mentioned Elxai, or Elcesai^c, who is placed by Epiphanius in the time of Trajan; and the same writer speaks of his followers as joining the Ebionites. There would be no difficulty in receiving this tradition, nor in supposing the Elcesaites to have continued till the third century: but Origen has been supposed to speak of them as rising into notice in his own day. If this

^z Eus. *H. E.* VI. 37.

^b Apud Eus. *H. E.* VI. 38.

^a See Mosheim *de Rebus ante*
Const. sæc. III. §. 27.

^c Page 19.

A. D.
247.

were the case, we must suppose Epiphanius to have been mistaken, when he spoke of Elxai as living in the reign of Trajan : but it is more probable, that Origen was not describing a new heresy : he may have witnessed an attempt at reviving some old opinions ; and there are other passages in his writings which shew that he had studied the doctrines of the Ebionites. It was about this period, that he first allowed his discourses to be taken down in writing. He also wrote his commentary upon St. Matthew in twelve books, and another upon the twelve minor prophets. His great work against Celsus was perhaps written in the reign of Philip ; and nothing has come down to us from ecclesiastical antiquity, which possesses a greater value. Celsus, as I have stated, was an heathen philosopher, who lived in the second century. The book, which he wrote against the Gospel, has long since perished : and we do not know the reason which induced Origen to write a refutation of it after so long an interval, except that he was urged to the task by his friend Ambrosius. There is perhaps none of his works, which is so free from objectionable passages : and if the soundness of his opinions was still called in question, he may have published this work as one way of asserting his orthodoxy. Such a notion may be confirmed by the fact of his writing letters to Fabianus, the bishop of Rome, and other bishops, in defence of his opinions^d ; and he even went so far as to express regret for some of his publications. This at least shews that he was still suspected of being unsound in his belief ; and the defence which he offered is not very satisfactory, when he stated that

^d Eus. H. E. VI. 36.

his friend Ambrosius had published some writings which were intended to be kept secret^e. He asserted, A. D.
247. that some other of his works had been corrupted by heretics^f.

The only exception to the peace of the church throughout the reign of Philip was at Alexandria. Dionysius had succeeded Heraclas as bishop of that see in 246 or 247. I have mentioned him already as a pupil of Origen, and as appointed to the catechetical school when Heraclas was advanced to the bishopric. His successor in the school appears to have been Pierius^g, who was a man of great learning and a presbyter of the Alexandrian church. He was probably young at this time; but he may have been acquainted with Origen before he left the city in 231; and Pamphilus, who is said to have been a scholar of Pierius, may have learnt from him to venerate the name of Origen. It might be thought, from the words of Jerom^h, that some change took place at this time in the mode of electing a bishop. He says, that up to the time of Dionysius it had always been the custom at Alexandria for the presbyters to nominate one of their own body, who had filled some high station. He does not say whether any different form was now substituted; nor does he state whether this nomination was submitted to the election of any other

^e Hieron. Epist. LXXXIV. 10. p. 527.

^f Rufin. *Apol. pro Orig.*

^g Philipp. Sidet. *apud Dodwell. Diss. ad Iren.* p. 488. Photius also speaks of him as master of the school, (Cod. 118, 119.) though this is not said by

Eusebius. Dodwell supposes Pierius to have succeeded upon the death of Dionysius in 265. See Guerike *de Schola Alexandrina*, p. 74.

^h Epist. CXLVI. 1. p. 1076. See Le Sueur, *Hist. de l'Eglise* an. 247.

- A. D. 247. persons. This appears to be his meaning: and I have quotedⁱ Cyprian, who wrote a few years later, as saying that the choice was made by the neighbouring bishops in the presence of the people. Whoever had the power of recommendation or election on the present occasion, Dionysius was likely to be chosen as worthy of this important station; and he soon found that patience and courage, as well as learning, were requisites for a Christian bishop. About the year 248, which was the last but one of the reign of Philip, a persecution of the Christians broke out at Alexandria. The emperor was perhaps altogether unconscious of it, and it seems to have been a mere ebullition of popular feeling. The advocates of idolatry were enraged at the progress of the Gospel, and great cruelties were exercised in urging the Christians to abjure their faith^k. This continued till the Easter of 249, when the heathen began to quarrel among themselves from some political differences, and thus a short respite was given to the Christians: but their sufferings at Alexandria were only a prelude to a much more extensive persecution.

In the same year 249 some disturbances broke out in the eastern part of the empire, and the imperial title was given to Jotapianus. The legions in Pannonia conferred the same honour upon Marinus, who was shortly after put to death: and while Philip was preparing to march in person, Decius was sent forward to punish the rebellious legions. He had probably concerted his plans beforehand, and instead of going to Pannonia, he caused Philip to be

ⁱ Page 277. ^k Dionysius *apud Eus. H. E.* VI. 41. VII. 22.

put to death at Verona. This happened about the month of July, and his own elevation to the empire followed immediately. The name of Decius stands conspicuous on the list of persecutors. Many preceding emperors had connived at the ill treatment of the Christians, and Severus in 202 had issued a special edict against them: but from the death of that emperor in 211, to the accession of Decius in 249, a period of thirty-eight years, the church had been free from molestation, with the exception of the sufferings inflicted upon it by the barbarian Maximinus. We have seen, that this long period of peace was marked by a wide extension of the doctrines of the Gospel: but we have also seen that rash and unwarranted speculations were beginning to be entertained: and a contemporary writer¹ informs us, that the manners of the Christians, and even of the clergy, had been gradually becoming corrupt. He speaks of a secular, ostentatious spirit being very apparent. Marriages were formed with heathens; and even bishops were seen to neglect their flocks, and employ themselves in the most ordinary occupations with a view to getting money. His remark is perhaps correct, that the present crisis was rather a trial of faith than a persecution; and that the visitation was intended in mercy, when heavier chastisements might have been expected.

The motives, which inclined Decius to take this step, have not been explained. Eusebius says^m that it was a hatred to Philip, who had rather favoured the Christians; and the enemies of the late emperor were perhaps likely to be prejudiced against the

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249.

¹ Cyprian. *de Lapsis*, p. 182. ^m H. E. VI. 39. *Chron.*

A. D. 249. Gospel: but Gregory of Nyssa ascribes it entirely to the emperor's attachment to the old religion, and his dislike to the progress which the Gospel had been makingⁿ. Such a feeling had certainly begun to be expressed before this time. Origen, who wrote his work against Celsus, when the Christians had been enjoying a long peace, was aware that troubles were at hand, from the cry which was now every where raised against them^o. The civil and military movements, which had for some time been agitating the empire, were said to be owing to the remissness of the government, which allowed Christianity to increase: and there is no doubt that the real supporters of paganism had abundant cause for jealousy and vexation. At the end of 249, or early in 250, an edict was issued by Decius, which ordered that the Christians should be compelled to sacrifice to the Gods^p. It appears to have been sent to all the governors of provinces, who were threatened with severe punishments themselves, if they were remiss in applying insults and tortures to the Christians^q. The inhuman mandate was too willingly obeyed: and what we know of the sufferings at Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, and in Palestine, may convince us of the extent and severity of the persecution. In every place the blow was struck at the highest and most influential characters. Alexander,

ⁿ Vit. Greg. Thaum. p. 567.

^o Cont. Cels. III. 15.

^p Acta Pionii apud Baron. ad an. 254. num. IV. XXIII. The precise nature of the edict is discussed by Mosheim, *de Rebus ante Const. sæc. III.* §. 11. The edict itself was printed at Thoulouse in 1664, but it has

great marks of being spurious. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 400. This is reckoned the seventh persecution by Eusebius, Jerom, Augustin, Orosius, and Sulp. Severus: others make it the eighth.

^q Greg. Nyss. *Vit. Greg. Thaum.* p. 568.

the venerable bishop of Jerusalem, who had held the bishopric nearly forty years, was brought before the magistrates at Cæsarea, and being thrown into prison died there shortly after^r. His successor in the see was Mazabaues. Origen was also a great sufferer. It has been supposed^s that he had gone to Tyre before this time: but whether he was in that city or at Cæsarea when the persecution broke out, is uncertain. He was now about sixty-five years old; but his age did not save him from being thrown into prison, and exposed to much bodily suffering^t. He appears to have continued in prison till the death of Decius.

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Babylas, bishop of Antioch, was treated in a similar way, and died before he was released. An ancient writer^u has asserted, that his imprisonment was ordered by the emperor himself, who happened at this time to be at Antioch, and who met with resistance from Babylas, when he wished to force himself into a meeting of the Christians. This may have been the case, if Decius set out on an expedition into Persia^x: but it seems more probable, that the war, for which he was preparing at the end of 251, was directed against the Goths^y: and it must remain uncertain, whether he was personally concerned in the martyrdom of Babylas. The successor

^r Eus. *H. E.* VI. 39, 46. Ruinart, p. 133. This was perhaps A. D. 251.

^s Huetius, *Origenian.* I. 4. 2.

^t Eus. *H. E.* VI. 39.

^u Chrysostom. *de Babyla.* vol. I. p. 668. Nicephorus says that the emperor was Numerianus, which is certainly a mistake. *H. E.* V. 26. It appears

to be the same story which is told by Eusebius of Philip. See page 315. Philostorgius says that the emperor was Numerianus, or Decius. *H. E.* VII. 8.

^x See Baronius, ad an. 253. num. CXXVIII.

^y See Pagi ad Baron. an. 253. num. CXXXIX.

A. D. 250. to the see of Antioch was Fabius. There is also evidence that the persecution was felt severely in Asia Minor. In Pontus many Christians were imprisoned and put to death, and Gregory, bishop of Neocæsarea, saved himself by concealment. Alexander, surnamed Carbonarius, bishop of Comana, was burnt to death^z, and most probably at this period. Nestor, the bishop of Perga, in Pamphylia, was martyred: and at Smyrna, though Eudæmon the bishop was frightened into a denial of his faith, several other persons had the courage to meet death, among whom Pionius, a presbyter, has obtained particular commemoration^a.

The Alexandrian Christians had enjoyed a short respite from their sufferings, when the edict of Decius was a signal for much heavier trials. The names of several martyrs are preserved in the letters of Dionysius^b; from which we also learn, that not a few persons saved themselves by joining in the heathen sacrifices. Pierius, whom I have mentioned as master of the catechetical school, was among the sufferers, and his brother Isidorus appears to have met his death^c. The bishop was personally in great danger. After eluding the search of Sabinus the Roman governor for some days, he was at length taken and carried to Taposiris. He then recovered his liberty, and we know nothing concerning him during the remainder of the reign of Decius: but it is most probable that he continued in concealment. The nature of the coun-

^z Greg. Nyss. *Vit. Greg. Thaum.* p. 564.

^a Acta Pionii apud Ruinart, p. 137. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 2. p. 229.

^b Apud Eus. *H. E.* VI. 40, 41, 42.

^c Compare Phot. *cod.* 118, 119. Dionys. apud Eus. *H. E.* VI. 41. p. 307.

try afforded facilities of this kind. The north-eastern boundary of Egypt was mountainous, and large tracts of desert extended to the neighbourhood of Alexandria. Chæremon, bishop of Nilopolis, fled to one of these mountains^d; and from the fact of his being accompanied by his wife, we learn that at this time there was no law against bishops being married^e. Several other persons sought the same hiding-place and were carried off by the Saracens, who now begin to appear in history. Others fled to the deserts: and Paul, who has been called the first hermit, withdrew from the persecution which had now extended to the Thebaid, and concealed himself in a cave, where he lived till the following century. This extraordinary man has had his life written by Jerom. He had received a learned education, and was left by his parents at an early age with a considerable fortune; but finding his life in danger in consequence of the edict of Decius, he retired into the desert at the age of twenty-two. It is probable, as I have already stated^f, that a system of monachism had existed in Egypt from an early period. The Therapeutæ, described by Philo, were a species of monks: and the persecutions, which occurred so frequently in the latter half of the third century, drove great numbers of Christians to embrace a solitary life. Beside which, it must be mentioned, that the writers of the Alexandrian school had for a long time been preparing the way for that ascetic and contemplative mode of life, which

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250.

^d Dionys. *apud Eus. H. E.* of bishops, priests, and deacons.
VI. 42.

^e The fifth of the Apostolical ^f Lect. X. p. 301.
Canons recognises the marriage

A. D. 250. was now beginning to be so highly prized among Christians. The works of Clement, and still more of Origen, are filled with passages which countenance such a system^g: and the later Platonists (who studied in the same school) not only impressed these principles upon their disciples, but referred to Pythagoras and other ancient philosophers, as having led a life of abstinence^h.

The see of Carthage was at this time filled by Cyprian, who had succeeded Donatus in 248 or 249. He had been brought up in heathenism, and to the profession of teaching rhetoric: but having been converted to the Gospel by Cæcilius, he became a great admirer of the works of Tertullian, and soon employed his pen in exposing the follies of idolatry. Upon the death of Donatus he was raised to the bishopric by general acclamation, though he had been a Christian but a very few years, and was himself unwilling to accept the office. His election was opposed by five presbyters, one of whom was Novatus; and the factious disposition of this man was the cause of much subsequent trouble to Cyprian. The bishop received his appointment at a critical period. The edict of Decius was soon conveyed to Carthage; and the populace as quickly profited by the liberty of harassing the Christians. The name of Cyprian was often called out in the circus and amphytheatre, that he might furnish sport by being exposed to wild beasts. His goods were seized, and exposed publicly to sale; but he contrived to escape with his life, and attended by a few friends he hid him-

^g See Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. sæc. III.* §. 29.

^h See Porphyry's treatise *de Abstinencia*.

self in some place not far from Carthage. This was at the beginning of the year 250; and in the mean time the persecution had been raging with equal violence at Rome. Fabianus the bishop was martyred. A presbyter named Moses, and several others, were thrown into prison: and the storm raged with such fury, that a successor to the bishopric was not appointed for more than a yearⁱ. It is remarkable, however, that the close intimacy between Rome and Carthage was not wholly interrupted in these trying times. The Roman clergy were informed of Cyprian's flight, and they wrote to acquaint him with the death of their own bishop. They had also expressed some doubts as to the propriety of his leaving his flock at this period: and in return he sent them copies of thirteen letters which he had written from his retreat to the clergy of Carthage. These shewed that he had not neglected his duties, though forced to absent himself from Carthage; and they also acquaint us with a subject of disagreement, which continued to divide the church for a very long period.

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The Decian persecution, though it made many martyrs and confessors, had also caused great numbers to comply with the imperial edict by offering sacrifices. These *lapsed* Christians, as they were called, were very numerous at Carthage: but many, perhaps most of them, retained their belief in Christ, though their courage had given way when their lives were in danger. There were others, who had allowed their names to be added to the

ⁱ This may be accounted for by an expression of Cyprian's, that Decius had declared that he would rather endure a competitor in the empire, than a bishop of Rome. *Ep.* 52. p. 69.

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250.

list of those who had offered sacrifice, though they had not themselves actually done so. The magistrates were perhaps satisfied if they could make this list appear large: the triumph of heathenism over Christianity was acknowledged; and they gave to these persons a *libellus*, or written document, in which they were named as having offered sacrifice, and which saved them from further molestation. This seems the most probable explanation of the term *libellatici*, which was applied to one description of the lapsed^k. It had been the custom, after former persecutions, that all such persons should submit for a time to a prescribed course of penitence; and after having confessed their crime, and received imposition of hands from the bishop and clergy, they were once more admitted to the communion of the church^l. It was also allowed that confessors who had suffered torture, or received sentence of death, might give a written paper to any person who had lapsed; and the bearer was entitled to a remission of some part of the ecclesiastical discipline^m: but precautions had been taken that these *letters of peace*, as they were called, should not be given too frequently, or to undeserving persons. The absence of Cyprian from Carthage caused some difficulty in these cases. The

^k See the life of Cyprian, prefixed to the Benedictine edition, §. VI. Kortholt. *de Persecut.* c. 8. §. 57. p. 382. Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const.* sec. III. §. 11.

^l That the lapsed were treated with indulgence in the second century, is shewn by Eusebius in his remarks upon

the persecution at Lyons, (H. E. V. 2.) and in his account of the letter written by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to the Amastrians. (Ib. IV. 23.)

^m The custom is mentioned by Tertullian *de Pudic.* 22. *ad mart.* 1. See Albaspinus *Ob-serv. Eccles.* I. 20. Mosheim, l. c. §. 12.

lapsed applied in great numbers to the confessors ; and there was a general wish to admit them to communion ; but the consent of the bishop had always been considered necessary. The presbyters, who had opposed the election of Cyprian, now set themselves openly against his authority. They urged the confessors not to wait for his sanction, and they admitted the lapsed to communion with themselves : there were also some confessors, whose indiscriminate use of this privilege, and their utter disregard of the bishop's remonstrances, could only serve to aggravate the evils of this unhappy period. Several letters passed between Cyprian and his clergy upon this subject ; and when he saw that there was no chance of his returning soon to Carthage, he sent word that if any person had received a paper from a confessor, and was in danger of dying, he might be admitted to communion without delay. The same permission had been given by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandriaⁿ, who was in the same circumstances with Cyprian, as to absence from his city : and there were perhaps few places in which this question did not lead to much discussion at the present crisis.

The letters, which Cyprian had written to his clergy, were transmitted to Rome, where a similar difficulty had occurred on account of the vacancy of the see. The Roman clergy entirely approved of what Cyprian had done ; and having met together, though they had no spiritual head, they decided that the lapsed, when on the point of death, might be admitted to communion. They communicated

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250.

ⁿ Eus. *H. E.* VI. 44.

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250.

their decision to several other churches, as well as to Carthage; and it is well worthy of remark, that the persecution did not hinder the Christians in different countries from keeping up a close correspondence with each other; and that they manifested an earnest desire to act in concert. It is also a singular circumstance, that at the time when an infallible head of the church would have been particularly needed for the settling of a question which was in some measure new, the church of Rome was without a bishop. The Roman clergy shewed great anxiety upon the subject, and exchanged several letters with the bishop and clergy of Carthage: but they assumed to themselves no kind of superiority; and though Cyprian was glad to have their concurrence and support, he writes as an equal, and as one who in his own diocese was perfectly independent. On the whole he found great deference paid to him by his clergy in his absence. A party, which was headed by Novatus and Felicissimus, persuaded Lucianus and some other confessors to admit the lapsed: but a great majority complied with the letters of Cyprian, in which he pronounced such persons to be excommunicated. The persecution rather abated toward the end of the year, though those who were already in prison were not released, and Cyprian himself did not venture to return. He sent however two other bishops and a presbyter to Carthage, who were to act in his behalf; and among other customs we observe him giving orders, that the days on which any of the confessors died in prison should be carefully noted for future commemoration. A similar custom was established by Greg-

ory in Pontus, as soon as the cessation of persecution enabled him to return to his diocese. He observed that one cause, which kept the common people in idolatry, was their fondness for festivals; and he accordingly ordered the Christians to meet every year at the places in which the bodies of martyrs had been buried^o. The meetings were attended with festivities, which perhaps had the desired effect in attracting the heathen, though the propriety of the measure, in a religious point of view, may well be questioned.

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250.

In the beginning of the year 251 Cyprian had entertained hopes of returning to Carthage. The persecution was still on the decline, which was perhaps owing to the emperor being threatened with hostilities. The Goths were becoming formidable, and Lucius Priscus, who commanded in Macedonia, was ready to join them. Decius marched to meet these assailants, leaving Valerianus to command at Rome: but though these movements may have been favourable to the Christians at Carthage, Cyprian was prevented returning by the breaking out of a schism. This happened a short time before Easter; and the authors of it were the five presbyters, who had already opposed his authority, and a layman named Felicissimus, who shortly after received ordination from Novatus, one of these presbyters^p. Another instigator of the schism was Fortunatus: and these men, though they were at first few in

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251.

^o Greg. Nyss. *vit. Greg. Thaum.* p. 574.

^p Novatus is said not to have been one of these five presbyters, by Pearson, *Annal. Cypri.*

Mosheim de Rebus ante Const. sac. III. §. 14. p. 508. He is said to have been one of them by Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 392.

A. D. number, laid the foundation of a division in the
 251. African church, which lasted for centuries. Some
 seceders, who took up their residence in the mountains, were called from that circumstance Montenses; and the Donatists, who rose into notice in the following century, may be traced to the same turbulent and discontented source.

Cyprian was thus prevented from being in Carthage at Easter; but when the festival was over he found it safe to return, having been separated from his clergy for about a year and four months. His first care was to convene a council for deciding the case of the lapsed; and before it assembled, he wrote a work upon the subject, which is still extant, entitled, *de Lapsis*. The council consisted of several bishops, presbyters, and deacons^q; and since all the lapsed were not equally guilty, a suitable distinction was made in the sentence. Those who had actually offered sacrifice, had a penitential course of discipline imposed upon them for a definite time: but the *libellatici*, having already repented, were at once restored to communion. Felicissimus and his adherents appeared before the council, and were excommunicated. In the mean time the see of Rome, which had been vacant above a twelvemonth, was filled up by the election of Cornelius. We learn that sixteen bishops were present, when he was chosen, and that he had the almost unanimous voices of the clergy and people. One of

^q Cyprian says expressly, that from the beginning of his bishopric he had never done any thing without the advice of his clergy and the consent of

the people. *Epist.* V. p. 11. XXVIII. p. 39. XXIV. p. 33. See Mosheim, *de Rebus ante Const. sæc.* III. §. 23.

his own letters is also extant^r, which gives us an interesting account of the ecclesiastical establishment, as it existed at Rome at this period. There were forty-six presbyters; from which it has been inferred, that there were as many churches: and we may at least conclude, that there were as many distinct congregations. The deacons were only seven, the number having perhaps been continued from the Apostolical times; but there were also seven subdeacons, and forty-two assistants. The exorcists, readers, and door-keepers, amounted to fifty-two; and the number of widows and other poor persons who were maintained by public charity, was above one hundred and fifty. This statement leaves no room to doubt, that the Christians of Rome were very numerous^s; and that collections were still made for the relief of poorer brethren.

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251.

The election of Cornelius took place in June, and news of it arrived at Carthage while the council was considering the question of the lapsed; but Novatus had before this time gone to Rome, and spread his schismatical principles in that city^t. The character given of Novatus by Cyprian^u represents him as disgraced by almost every vice: and we may perhaps account for his violence, when we find that he would have been excommunicated and degraded for cruelty to his wife, if the persecution had not interrupted the proceedings against him. Early in 251 he came to Rome, and he found a

^r Apud Eus. *H. E.* VI. 43.

^s Gibbon estimates them at about fifty thousand. *Decline and Fall*, c. XV.

^t Pacianus seems to say, that he went to conceal himself at

Rome, when the council at Carthage was proceeding to examine into his conduct to his father and his wife. *Epist.*

3.

^u *Epist.* XLIX. p. 63.

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251.

person there who was predisposed to copy his factious conduct. This was Novatian, who, from similarity of name, as well as of principles, has sometimes been confounded with Novatus. There can however be no doubt, that they were two different persons, one of them a presbyter of Carthage, and the other of Rome. Novatian was a man of learning, and had taken part in the correspondence which passed in the preceding year between the Roman clergy and Cyprian^x. He is also supposed to have been the author of a treatise on the Trinity, which has come down to us, and which does not bear the marks of any heretical sentiments. His behaviour, however, at the end of the Decian persecution was flagrantly irregular, and led the way to most disastrous consequences. His conduct had been suspected before the election of Cornelius; and the presbyters, who had been lying in prison since the death of Fabianus, pronounced him excommunicated, as well as five other presbyters who were attached to him. Matters were in this state when Novatus came from Carthage to Rome, and he easily persuaded Novatian to commence a schism. When Cornelius was elected bishop, Novatian opposed it. Rumours were circulated, that Cornelius had lapsed, and communicated with bishops who had done the same. These charges were abundantly refuted^y: but Novatian not only continued his opposition, but set himself up as a rival bishop. He persuaded three bishops, who are represented as

^x Inter Epist. Cypr. XXX. *Catal. Script.*

et XXXI. Jerom mentions ^y Cyprian. *Epist.* LII. p. other writings of Novatian. 69.

simple, uneducated men^z, to come from a remote part of Italy and assist in his consecration. One of these bishops repented of what he had done, and Cornelius admitted him to communion, but merely as a layman: the other two were deposed, and successors appointed in their place by the bishop of Rome.

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251.

That there should at one time be two bishops of the same see, was a thing almost unprecedented; and though the character of Novatian is drawn by his adversaries, it cannot be disputed that he acted most improperly. It is added, that he had denied his profession in the time of persecution: and so far from being fit to be a bishop, he ought not even to have been ordained a presbyter, having received what was called clinical baptism; that is, he had been baptized in his bed, as he lay dangerously ill; and he had neglected afterwards to present himself to the bishop for confirmation. Cornelius, who mentions this anecdote^a, states also, that clinical baptism made a person unfit for any office in the church; and such most probably was the custom at Rome; but Cyprian gives it as his own opinion^b, that such baptisms were as valid as any other.

As soon as Cornelius had been elected, he was anxious to have the event made known at Carthage. Novatian also wrote letters to the same quarter: and Cyprian despatched two bishops to Rome, that they might bring back a true account of the matter. The rapidity with which these deputations passed and repassed in a few months, is very remarkable: but the bishop and clergy of Carthage were soon

^z Cornel. *apud Eus. H. E.*
VI. 43.

^a Ibid.

^b Epist. 76. p. 156.

A. D. 251. convinced, that the election of Cornelius was perfectly valid. He was accordingly recognised as bishop of Rome; and all farther overtures from Novatian were rejected. Some confessors, who had at first supported this schismatic, now retracted, and were readmitted by the Roman church: and that the dispute might finally be adjusted, Cornelius assembled a council, which was attended by sixty bishops and a still greater number of presbyters, all of whom were unanimous in condemning Novatian. They also settled the question of the lapsed in the same charitable spirit which had been shewn by the council at Carthage: but it was farther agreed, in the case of bishops or clergy, that though their repentance might be accepted, they could only be received to communion as laymen, and they could no longer exercise their spiritual functions^c. Synods were held in other places, which came to a similar decision: and Cornelius was so anxious for unanimity, that he sent the determination of the Roman council to several churches, and in particular to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, who was inclined to side with Novatian. Cyprian also shewed the same anxiety for peace and concord; and beside announcing the election of Cornelius to all the African churches, he wrote about this time a treatise which is extant, *upon the unity of the church*. The question concerning the lapsed was daily assuming more importance, because Novatian was forming a party, which took the severe and unforgiving side in judging these unfortunate persons. At first he was viewed only as a schismatic, but the Novatians were

^c Cyprian. Ep. LXVIII. p. 120.

afterwards spoken of as heretics. They probably came by degrees to the full severity of their doctrines, and began by denying the efficacy of repentance to the lapsed^d. They held, that the church had no power to give absolution; and they acted upon this principle in all its rigour towards those who had abjured their faith in the time of persecution. It may appear singular, that Novatian, who was enticed into his schism by Novatus, should have pursued such different conduct toward the lapsed. The opponents of Cyprian at Carthage had shewn an indiscriminate lenity and an indecent hurry in admitting these persons to communion; whereas Novatian erred in the opposite extreme; and there is reason to think, that a mere love of opposition was the moving principle in both. Cyprian was slow in coming to a decision, and wished to try the contrition of the lapsed by the test of time. Novatus was determined to oppose him, and therefore admitted the lapsed without further delay: but when Novatian's schism was formed, the council of Carthage had already agreed to a sentence of lenity, and Cornelius decided upon acting in the same way. Novatian therefore took the opposite side; and his unforgiving doctrines were soon applied, not merely to the lapsed, but to all cases of open and notorious sin. I have mentioned, that persons guilty of murder or adultery were treated by the Montanists with the same inexorable rigour as apostates from their religion: other persons also, beside the Montanists, took the same view; and this will perhaps account

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251.

^d Upon this point, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. III. part. 3. p. 77.

A. D. 251. for the Novatian doctrines spreading rapidly in so many countries. There had in fact been many Novatians in principle long before the time of Novatian: but the Decian persecution forced the question of the lapsed into general notice, and Novatian merely gave greater form and consistency to a party already in existence. A few years later the name of *Cathari* or *Pure* was given to the Novatians, either by themselves or their opponents: and while they claimed credit, as uncompromising maintainers of virtue and religion, they condemned the practice of the church as holding out encouragement to sin. It should be mentioned, that the Novatians, though looked upon as heretical in these points, were not thought to be unsound in the great articles of faith; and in the controversies which concerned the second and third persons of the Trinity, they always sided with the Catholics. It was about this period, if we follow the authority of two later writers^e, that the custom was established in every church, of there being a priest whose special office was to take the management of penitents. If any persons had fallen into sin after baptism, they were to go to this priest, who prescribed them a certain course of penitentiary discipline. The disputes which arose in the middle of the third century concerning the lapsed, and the controversies introduced by the Novatians, were not unlikely to give rise to an institution of this kind, and some such arrangement would probably be found convenient, if not necessary: but it must be added, that the subsequent history of the church presents little or no traces of such an institution

^e Socrat. V. 19 .Sozom. VII. 16.

having been general ; and auricular confession derives no support whatever from the accounts which have come down to us concerning the treatment of penitents. A. D.
251.

This history of Novatian will account for the bishops of Rome and Carthage being so anxious for unanimity in settling the case of the lapsed. The easy and rapid communication between distant churches also serves to shew, that the persecution had greatly abated. I have said, that this might be owing to the necessity which Decius was under of marching against the Goths ; and having penetrated into the ancient Scythia, he was killed, with his two sons, at Abrutum about the beginning of December in the present year. The imperial title was then given to Gallus and Hostilianus ; and Volusianus, the son of Gallus, was created Cæsar.

LECTURE XXVI.

A. D.
252.

THE beginning of the year 252 was past in continued attempts on the part of Novatian to strengthen his party, and of Cyprian and Cornelius to defeat him. A rival bishop, named Maximus, was set up for a time at Carthage; but the attempt totally failed; and in the month of May a council was held in that city, attended by sixty-six bishops, in which the same disposition to lenity was shewn as in the decision of the year preceding. Another question was also laid before the council, which affected the question of infant baptism. An African bishop, though he did not deny that infants might be baptized, had expressed doubts whether the rite, like that of Jewish circumcision, ought not to be deferred till the eighth day. The council unanimously rejected such a notion, and decided that infants might be baptized at any moment after their birth. I have mentioned, that Privatus was condemned about the year 240 by a council of ninety bishops; and he now presented himself to the present council, that his case might receive another hearing. This however was refused, and Privatus revenged himself by setting up Fortunatus, as another rival bishop of Carthage. Fortunatus was one of the five presbyters, who had already shewn such determined opposition to Cyprian. In this assump-

tion of the episcopal title he was only supported by a very small party: but Felicissimus, whom we have seen as an original promoter of the schism, sailed immediately for Rome, and reported that twenty-five bishops had assisted in the consecration of Fortunatus. The bishop and clergy of Rome refused to have any communication with him; but at the same time Cornelius wrote to Cyprian, rather complaining, that the latter had sent no official information of the election of Fortunatus. There seems no reason why Cyprian should have done so: but if he had been so inclined, he was perhaps prevented by attempts which were now making at Carthage to renew the persecution. In the answer which he wrote to Cornelius^a, he speaks of the populace again demanding, that he should be thrown to the lions: but with respect to the election of Fortunatus, he gently rebukes Cornelius for having paid any attention to idle rumours, and expressly asserts the independence of the African church in deciding questions connected with itself.

About the same period a council was held at Antioch. I have mentioned that Cornelius sent an account of his own proceedings to Fabius, the bishop of that see, who was inclined to agree with Novatian. We are perhaps not to infer, that Fabius had held any direct communication with Novatian; but he may have shewn a disposition to treat the lapsed with severity; and he received letters upon the subject, not only from Cornelius, but from Dionysius bishop of Alexandria. The latter took a very active part in opposing the doctrines of Novatian; and we read of his sending letters, not only into Egypt, but

^a Epist. 55. p. 82.

A. D. 252. to Laodicea, and even to Armenia, in which the efficacy of repentance was made to rest on its true principles^b. The question appears to have been as much discussed in the east as in the west. A council was summoned to meet at Antioch, which was to be attended by bishops from distant places. Dionysius speaks of Firmilianus in Cappadocia, and Theoctistus in Palestine, having requested him to be present at the council; but before it assembled, Fabius died, and was succeeded in his bishopric by Demetrianus. We are not informed, whether the council actually met, nor what were its decisions: but we can hardly doubt, that they were unfavourable to Novatian, and that the lapsed were admitted to communion after a prescribed course of penitence^c. Dionysius drew up some rules for his own diocese, which settled this discipline according to the relative magnitude of offences.

If the council assembled at Antioch, it was probably at the beginning of the year; for in the latter part of it the persecution was renewed with increased violence. One motive may have been found for this cruelty in a pestilence, which broke out in the autumn of this year with most fatal effects, and continued for fifteen years. Hostilianus himself fell a victim to it, leaving Gallus in sole possession of the empire; and we know that Gallus followed the example of Decius in issuing an order for compelling Christians to sacrifice^d. We have often had occasion to observe, that visitations from Heaven,

^b Eus. *H. E.* VI. 46.

Eus. H. E. VII. 5.

^c Dionysius seems to say, that Demetrianus agreed with Cyprian and the rest. *Apud*

^d Dionys. *apud Eus. H. E.* VII. 1. Cyprian. *Ep.* 55. p. 82.

such as pestilence or famine, were adduced by the heathen as a charge against the Christians: and when the present pestilence had raged for some years, we find Porphyry^e complaining, that neither Æsculapius, nor any other deity, had brought assistance to Rome. He adds, that from the time when Jesus began to be worshipped, no benefit from the Gods had been experienced by the public at large. Porphyry was not aware of the remarkable confession which he was thus making to the weakness of his own cause: but if the public reasoned like himself, the Christians were certain to be sufferers, as if the spreading of their doctrines had brought upon the empire the anger of the gods. Whatever causes may have combined to revive the persecution, it was felt with great severity in Africa. Cyprian appears to have anticipated it; and having convened a council of forty-one bishops, he decided that the lapsed, who had shewn from the first a sincere contrition, should immediately be admitted to communion. The council of the preceding year had only held out to them the prospect of reconciliation after a long course of discipline: but now that the trial was again coming on, it was thought best to admit them at once, as soldiers who were impatient to shew their fidelity to their heavenly Master. The decision was made without any communication having been held with Rome; but Cyprian wrote immediately to Cornelius, informing him of what had been done.

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Cornelius lived to receive only one more letter from Cyprian, and that was addressed to him at

^e Apud Theodoret. Serm. XII. vol. IV. p. 679.

A. D. Centumcellæ, a place at a short distance from Rome.
 252. He was sent thither, while many of his companions were meeting deaths in various shapes. Those who had lapsed in the Decian persecution, now redeemed their character by submitting courageously to every torture; and in the month of September Cornelius himself received his crown of martyrdom. His successor was Lucius, who was forced to leave Rome almost as soon as he was elected; but he returned before the end of the year, and received a letter of congratulation from Cyprian. The bishop of Carthage did not leave his city, as he had been obliged to do two years before; but he contrived to remain there and preserve his life, though almost every day brought some of his clergy to imprisonment or martyrdom. His attention to the spiritual and temporal wants of his flock were unceasing. Wherever Christians were suffering, he looked upon them as a brother, or rather as a father: and while in a treatise addressed to a heathen, named Demetrianus, he exposed the falsehood of ascribing the present pestilence to the Christians, he excited the Christians at Carthage to make a charitable collection for some sufferers in Numidia. An incursion of barbarians had carried off a great number of prisoners of both sexes, and Cyprian raised a subscription for their ransom, which amounted to about 3000 pounds^f.

A. D. These events have brought us to the beginning of
 253. the year 253, and in the month of March, Lucius, the bishop of Rome, was martyred, having held the see only a few months. Stephen, his successor, was more fortunate in the times upon which he was thrown.

^f Gibbon estimates it at 850*l*. words are, “Sestertia centum (Decline and Fall, c. XV.) The millia nummorum.” Epist. 60.

Civil commotions generally caused a diversion which was favourable to the Christians: and Gallus, like his predecessor Decius, enjoyed his cruel pastime but for a short period. Æmilianus, after defeating the Gauls, who had overrun Asia Minor, was proclaimed emperor in Mœsia. Gallus, and his son Volusianus, marched against him, but met their deaths at Interamna in the month of May. This however did not secure the empire for Æmilianus. He held his title for not more than three months, when he was defeated and killed by Valerianus, who had been proclaimed emperor in Rhætia. The Christians profited immediately by the change. Valerianus, who was now seventy years of age, had always shewn himself well inclined towards them, and upon his being raised to the empire he put a stop to their persecution. The only drawback to their rejoicing at the return of peace and tranquillity was, what they shared in common with the heathen, the continuance of the pestilence. It was probably at this period, that Cyprian published his work *de Mortalitate*: and though the disease attacked Christians and heathens indiscriminately, the different conduct of the two parties under this awful visitation was very striking. Every detailed account which has come down to us of severe epidemics in ancient times, represents a depravation of morals as consequent upon the sickness. It was so in the present instance; and the most painful feature was the unnatural disregard displayed by the heathen toward their relations and friends. The Christians, on the other hand, were unremitting in their attentions to the dying and the dead. Cyprian, and the other bishops, set a noble example of devotedness to their

A. D.
253.

A. D. 253. flocks. The fear of contagion seemed never to be thought of: and as far as money or personal attendance could mitigate the severity of such a scourge, the Christians enjoyed an advantage, which could not fail to be observed even by the heathen. In Pontus this effect was very remarkable. Gregory was still bishop of Neocæsarea; and his conduct during the pestilence was the cause of many persons coming over to believe the Gospel.

It is pleasing to find, that this season of rest from persecution was a season also of unanimity and concord. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, informs us that all the churches were united upon the question of the lapsed^g: and since he says that he mentions only the most distinguished bishops, their names may be recorded in this place. Some of them we have already met with, such as Firmilianus of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; Theoctistus of Cæsarea in Palestine; Mazabanes of Jerusalem, or rather, as it was then called, of Ælia; and Demetrianus of Antioch. He names also Marinus, bishop of Tyre; Heliodorus of Laodicea, and Helenus of Tarsus: to which he adds, that all the churches in Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Pontus, and Bithynia agreed in the same sentiments. It is probable, that Origen's eventful life was brought to a close at this peaceful period. We left him in prison at the beginning of the Decian persecution, and he is supposed to have continued there till the death of Decius in 251. The few remaining years of his life appear to have been spent at Tyre. Eusebius speaks of his having written many letters after his release^h, none of

^g Apud Eus. *H. E.* VII. 5.

^h *H. E.* VI. 39.

which have come down to us: and since he is said to have died in the seventieth year of his age, it ought to be placed in the year 253 or 254ⁱ. Dionysius is known to have addressed a letter to him on the subject of martyrdom^k: and it would be pleasing to think that it was sent to him during his sufferings in the Decian persecution.

The period of peace, which lasted for nearly four years, will enable us to learn something of the state of Christianity in the west of Europe. Hitherto we have been able to collect only a few facts, and at considerable intervals: but we know enough to perceive that the Gospel was at this time firmly and widely established both in Spain and Gaul. It was natural, that the Christians in these countries should look with respect and deference to the great sees of Rome and Carthage, from which they may perhaps have derived their own origin, but with which they had at least a closer connexion than with Alexandria or Antioch, and the other eastern churches. Somewhere about the year 254 or 255 an application was made from Gaul, which shews, that the Christians in the West had as strong an idea of the unity of the Catholic church, as their brethren in the East: and the character of Cyprian, independent of the dignity of his see, made him the fittest person to be consulted in such matters. He had received more than one letter from Faustinus, bishop of Lyons, informing him that Marcianus, bishop of Arles, had embraced the tenets of Novatian, and had

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A. D.
253-255.

ⁱ Photius (Cod. 118.) mentions a tradition of his having suffered martyrdom at Cæsarea in the reign of Decius: but it

seems certainly to be unfounded. See Routh, *Reliq. Sacr.* vol. III. p. 273.

^k Eus. *H. E.* VI. ult.

A. D. 253-255. refused to extend the usual indulgence to the lapsed. Faustinus and other Gallic bishops had sent similar letters to Stephen, bishop of Rome; and Cyprian also wrote to the latter, to advise and consult him as to the course which they ought to pursue. It is plain that the bishops of Gaul did not acknowledge any absolute authority in their colleagues of Rome or Carthage; but they wished for advice in a matter of great importance; and they knew that a sentence of deposition or excommunication would be of little use, if the object of it still enjoyed the countenance of churches in Italy or Africa. They therefore represented the case to the spiritual heads of those two countries; and Cyprian, without waiting for his colleague¹, as he sometimes calls the bishop of Rome, wrote at once to Stephen, exhorting him, as bishop of Rome, to take the lead in preserving the unity of the church. We have seen that Cyprian asserted the exclusive right of Carthage to decide its own concerns; but where different churches were required to act in concert, he was willing to give precedence to Rome, except when he thought the bishop was decidedly in error. He says expressly that Rome was entitled to this precedence from the importance of the city^m; and he describes it as the chair of Peter, and the principal churchⁿ. On the present occasion he wished that letters should be written to the Gallic bishops, urging them to excommunicate Marcianus, and to elect another bishop in his room; assuring them also that in

¹ Stephanum collegam nostrum. Ep. 68. p. 119. Cornelius collega noster. ib. p. 120.

^m Quoniam pro magnitudine sua debeat Carthaginem Roma

præcedere. Ep. 49. p. 64.

ⁿ Navigare audent ad Petri cathedram atque ad ecclesiam principalem. Ep. 55. p. 86.

taking this step they would be supported by the churches of Rome and Carthage. His love of unity A. D.
253-255. restrained him from doing this himself, till he had consulted the bishop of Rome. He was anxious, that the same bishop of Arles should be recognized by both of them: and though the sequel of this affair is not related, we can easily tell what would be the conduct of a bishop of Rome, when he was called upon to interfere against a supporter of Novatian^o.

This history, which is undoubtedly authentic, presents a favourable idea of the progress of Christianity in Gaul. We can hardly doubt that there were many churches in that country, particularly in the south, at the beginning of the second century: nor is this at variance with the tradition, which has been admitted by many French writers, of the Gospel being preached there by seven foreign missionaries about the time of the Decian persecution, or not long before. According to this account, Dionysius went to Paris, Gatianus to Tours, Trophimus to Arles, Paul to Narbonne, Saturninus to Toulouse, Martial to Limoges, and Stremonius to Clermont^p. The names of most of these persons are the same with those companions of the Apostles who are said to have carried Christianity into Gaul in the first century^q: and it is most probable that the latter story is a corruption of the more credible tradition which relates to the reign of Decius. The cruelties

^o For this affair, see Cyprian, Ep. 67.

Mémoires, tom. IV. p. 988.

^p For authorities, see Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. sæc. II.* §. 3. *sæc. III.* §. 3. Tillemont,

^q See Lecture IX. page 283. and the authors mentioned in note f.

A. D. 253-255. exercised by this emperor may have been the cause of these men leaving their homes and taking refuge in Gaul: though the precise time of their undertaking the journey, and the country from which they came^q, are points about which we are left to conjecture. Gatianus and Saturninus are said to have gone from Rome^r, which may have been the case with the rest; and all of them are spoken of as bishops of different cities in France. It does not however follow that Christianity was introduced into these cities for the first time by their means: and the correspondence between the bishops of Carthage and Lyons concerning the bishop of Arles, which could not have been later than 255, seems to prove the contrary. There is good reason to believe that Saturninus suffered martyrdom^s: and the same is said of Dionysius, who not only became in later times the patron saint of Paris, but probably gave rise to the foolish legend of the Gospel being preached in that city by Dionysius the Areopagite.

A transaction, which happened about the same time in Spain, similar to that which concerned the bishop of Arles, will confirm the remarks made above as to the deference paid by Cyprian to the see of Rome. Two Spanish bishops, Basilides and Martialis, had been deposed for lapsing and for other offences, and successors had been appointed in their room. Both of them had confessed their crimes; but Basilides, and perhaps Martialis also, went af-

^q Orsi says that they were sent by Fabianus, bishop of Rome. *Istor. Eccles.* an. 250. p. 141. See also Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 989.

^r Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* X.

31. p. 527. Venant. Fortunat. II. 9. A Gothic Missal speaks of Saturninus coming from the East.

^s Ruinart, p. 128.

terwards to Rome, and deceived Stephen by a false statement of their case. It seems probable, that A. D.
253-255. Stephen admitted them to communion; but he at least listened favourably to their story, and so far gave them encouragement for attempting to recover their rank. Upon this, a deputation waited upon Cyprian from some of the Spanish churches; and Sabinus and Felix (who appear to have been the bishops elected in the room of Basilides and Martialis) came to him in person to acquaint him with the facts. Cyprian did not hesitate a moment. He saw that the deposition of the two lapsed bishops was in accordance with the decision of several councils, and that to restore them would be contrary to the practice of the whole catholic church. He accordingly convened a council of thirty-seven bishops; and so far from waiting as before for the concurrence of the bishop of Rome, he wrote to the Spanish bishops, in the name of the African council, telling them to adhere to what they had done, without regarding the opinion of the bishop of Rome. He says, that Stephen, who was a long way off, and ignorant of the true particulars, had been deceived: and if any persons held communion with the lapsed and degraded bishops, he charges them plainly with being partners in their guilt^t.

Another question was now coming on, which rather interrupted that unanimity, which had been so conspicuous in the Novatian controversy, and shews in what sense the other churches were inclined to give precedence to the see of Rome. I have mentioned that a council held at Carthage about the

^t For this affair, see Cyprian, Ep. 68.

A. D. year 215, and another held at Iconium about 231, 253-255. had decided against the validity of baptisms administered by heretics. Dionysius of Alexandria^u mentions another which was held at Synnas in Phrygia; and the heresy, which gave rise to these discussions, was probably that of the Montanists. It seems however to have been a practice in the eastern churches, and perhaps in the African^x, from the earliest times, to rebaptize all persons, who had received their baptism from the hands of heretics. If they had been baptized in the catholic church, and afterwards fell into heresy, they might be readmitted into the church by the simple imposition of hands from the bishop, without being rebaptized^y. From some cause or other, which is not explained, Stephen, bishop of Rome, had rather an angry controversy with some of the Asiatic bishops upon this point. Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and Helenus, bishop of Tarsus, are mentioned by name^z: other bishops also went on an embassy to Rome: but Stephen, who took the opposite view of the question, and maintained the validity of heretical baptisms, would not even admit these bishops to an interview, nor to the common offices of hospitality^a. He also threatened to hold no communion with any of the churches of Asia Minor: but, if we may

^u Apud Eus. *H. E.* VII. 7.

^x Cyprian speaks of many thousand persons having been baptized in Africa, who had come over to the church from heresy. *Epist.* 73. p. 130. The forty-fifth and forty-sixth of what are called the Apostolical canons, decidedly enjoin the rebaptizing of heretics;

from which Pearson concludes that these two canons were made before the council of Iconium. *Annal. Cypr.* an. 306.

^y Dionys. Alex. *apud Eus. H. E.* VII. 7. Cyprian. *Ep.* 71. p. 127. *Ep.* 74. p. 142.

^z Eus. *H. E.* VII.

^a Firmilian. *Epist.* inter op. *Cypr. Ep.* 75. p. 150, 151.

judge from a letter of Firmilianus, written not long after, these threats were little regarded. Firmilianus says plainly, that Stephen separated himself from the other churches, and not these churches from him. He calls him a schismatic, inasmuch as he had withdrawn from the unity of the church^b; and by allowing the baptisms of heretics, he had shewn himself to be worse than all heretics^c. These are strong expressions to be applied to a bishop of Rome: but Firmilianus evidently saw no distinction of rank between a bishop of Italy and a bishop of Cappadocia. He speaks of his just indignation being excited by the plain and palpable folly of Stephen, who boasted of his episcopal rank, and of his being the successor of St. Peter^d: and as to the latter pretension, he openly asserts that many things were done at Rome, which were contrary to apostolical authority^e.

This disagreement happened probably in the year 254, and Stephen was soon brought into contact with opponents nearer home. Eighteen bishops in Numidia consulted Cyprian upon the propriety of rebaptizing persons who had been baptized by heretics or schismatics. A council of thirty-one bishops

^b Peccatum quam magnum tibi exaggerasti, quando te a tot gregibus scidisti? Excidisti enim te ipsum. Noli te fallere. Siquidem ille est vere schismaticus, qui se a communione ecclesiasticæ unitatis apostatam fecerit. Dum enim putas omnes a te abstinere posse, solum te ab omnibus abstinuisti. p. 150.

^c Quin immo tu hæreticis omnibus pejor es. *Ib.*

^d Atque ego in hac parte juste indignor ad hanc tam apertam et manifestam Stephani stultitiam, quod qui sic de episcopatus sui loco gloriatur, et se successionem Petri tenere contendit. *Ib.* p. 148.

^e Eos autem qui Romæ sunt non ea in omnibus observare quæ sint ab origine tradita, et frustra apostolorum auctoritatem prætere, &c. *Ib.* p. 144.

A. D. 253-255. was then sitting at Carthage, and Cyprian wrote in their name, asserting the necessity of baptism being administered in such cases^f. A Mauritanian bishop named Quintus gave him the opportunity of writing a second letter, in which he justifies the practice, not only from ancient custom, but from the nature of the sacrament itself; and there are expressions in his letter, which seem to allude to the bishop of Rome maintaining a contrary opinion^g.

A. D. 256. Not long after, perhaps at the beginning of the year 256, another council was held at Carthage, which was attended by seventy bishops from Africa and Numidia. It may have been the custom at this period for such meetings to be held annually in every province. We know that such was the custom in Cappadocia^h; and the council, which was now held at Carthage, had many subjects brought before it for discussion. Among others, the validity of baptisms administered by heretics was again considered; and again the council decided, that they were not valid. It was also agreed, that if any spiritual person lapsed, or adopted any heresy, and then wished to be readmitted into the church, he might be admitted to communion as a layman, but could no longer exercise his clerical functions. We have seen, that this had already been the decision and the practice of the Roman church: but the council was aware, that its sentence concerning heretical baptisms was at variance with the opinion of the bishop of Rome. Cyprian accordingly wrote to Stephen, communicating to him all the decisions, which had been made upon this question at Car-

^f Epist. 70.

^g Epist. 71.

^h Firmilian. l. c. p. 143, 144.

thage. His letter is mild and conciliatory. He does not pretend to be ignorant that Stephen's mind was made up, and that he would be unwilling to relinquish impressions which he had once imbibed: but he observes, that this need not cause a dissolution of peace and concord. He disclaims any wish to dictate himself; but at the same time he asserts the right of every bishop to make rules for his own church, holding himself responsible to God alone. That Cyprian was sincere in these professions of moderation, may be seen by what he says in a letter written shortly after to Jubaianus, an African bishop, in which he defends at some length his own opinions, but gives to every bishop the right of acting for himselfⁱ.

A. D.
256.

It is to be regretted, that Stephen did not meet these advances in the same spirit of charity and forbearance. His view of the subject may appear at first sight the most liberal; and his opponents may be charged with bigotry for assuming that no baptism except their own was valid. They were even accused of breaking the apostolical injunctions by conferring baptism twice. But this was in fact a begging of the question at issue. Cyprian and his party denied that heretics could give Christian baptism, though they might wash with water, and even use the form of words prescribed by our Saviour. Cyprian therefore was no advocate for baptism being repeated, for he denied that any baptism had been administered at all; and his argument appears unanswerable, that unity of bap-

ⁱ Epist. 73. p. 137. The same is said at the end of Ep. 76. p. 158.

A. D. 256. tism can only exist with unity of faith; and that if heretics could not confer the Holy Spirit, they could not baptize. When we add to this, that he was willing to hold communion even with those, whom he believed in his conscience to be patrons of heresy, we shall perhaps say, that he had the advantage, not only in argument, but in Christian charity.

Stephen appears to have felt strongly on the other side; and we ought not to doubt that he spoke correctly, when he stated it to be the custom of his own church, not to rebaptize persons who came over from heresy. The church of Rome differed upon this point from the African and Eastern churches: which is perhaps to be accounted for, because heresy had been much less frequent at Rome than elsewhere. Even at the end of the fourth century we find it said, that no heresy had taken its rise in Rome^k: and therefore the cases, which led to the present controversy, were less likely to have occurred there than in the East. Nothing however could justify Stephen for defending his opinion with such intemperate warmth. We may infer from the letter of Firmilianus, that an idea of preeminence, as attached to the imperial city and the see of St. Peter, had more than passed across the mind of the bishop of Rome: and though such a notion produced no effect in Cappadocia, we have seen that Cyprian was willing to look upon Carthage as the second in rank of the western churches. This however only applied to rank and precedence, and not to authority in matters of faith^l.

^k Ruffin. in Symb. §. 3.

^l For the conduct of Cyprian in this controversy, see Wal-

chius, *Vindiciæ Epistolarum*

Stephen perhaps thought otherwise, when he treated with rudeness the messengers of the African council, and others who came upon the same subject from some churches in Asia Minor. He even threatened to exclude both these parties from communion with his own church. The letter, which he wrote at this time, and which has not come down to us, appears to have been very intemperate. He called his opponents perverters of the truth and traitors to ecclesiastical unity; expressions which were most unwarranted, when we consider that his own church stood absolutely alone in this controversy. Cyprian made no reply personally to Stephen, but he speaks strongly of his letter in some which he wrote at this time to persons who consulted him upon the question^m. The threat of excommunication drew from him the severe remark, that the person who uttered it was a friend of heretics and an enemy to Christiansⁿ. Cyprian however never lost sight of his love of unity. He sent one of his deacons into Cappadocia who was to deliver copies of his letters to Firmilianus: and although two councils had already assembled at Carthage, and the question had been unanimously decided, he convened another and still larger council in the autumn of 256, which was attended by eighty-seven bishops from Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, beside other clergy, and a large body

A. D.
256.

Cypriani ac Firmiliani. Jenæ, 1738. and for arguments against the preeminence of Rome, as deduced from this controversy, see Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. sæc. III.* §. 23.

^m Ad Jubaianum, Ep. 73.

Ad Pompeium, Ep. 74.

ⁿ Dat honorem Deo, qui hæreticorum amicus et inimicus Christianorum sacerdotes Dei veritatem Christi et ecclesiæ unitatem tuentes abstinentes putat? Ep. 74. p. 140.

A. D. 256. of laity. The proceedings were opened by Cyprian calling upon each of the bishops to deliver his opinion singly, while as a body they judged no one who differed from them, nor thought of excluding them from communion: and it is hardly possible to suppose, that he did not allude to the bishop of Rome when he adds, “For none of us makes himself to be a bishop of bishops, or tries tyrannically to frighten his colleagues into the necessity of obeying, since every bishop, in virtue of his own liberty and power, is master of his own will, and is as incapable of being judged by another, as he is of judging him himself: but let us wait for the universal judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the power of putting us over the government of his church, and of judging us for our actions^o.” The council was unanimous in confirming the former decisions.

We do not know whether any further communication was held with Stephen upon this subject: but before the end of the year, the deacon who had been sent into Cappadocia, returned with a letter from Firmilianus, in which he professed his entire agreement with Cyprian and the African church, and commented in no measured terms upon the letter of Stephen. I have already quoted some of the expressions of Firmilianus; and it is to be re-

^o Neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se esse episcoporum constituit, aut tyrannico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adigit, quando habeat omnis episcopus pro licentia libertatis et potestatis suæ arbitrium proprium, tamque judicari ab alio

non possit quam nec ipse potest alterum judicare: sed expectemus universi judicium Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui unus et solus habet potestatem et præponendi nos in ecclesiæ suæ gubernatione et de actu nostro judicandi. *Inter op. Cypri.* p. 329, 330.

gretted that he allowed himself to speak so warmly : but we must remember, that Stephen had threatened to exclude from his communion all the churches of Asia Minor ; and the letter of Firmilianus, though too vehement in its language, is an ample justification of Cyprian for differing from the church of Rome. The Alexandrian church appears also to have agreed with Cyprian, rather than with the bishop of Rome. Dionysius wrote to the latter^p ; and though his letter is lost, he seems to have exhorted him to moderation, and to have told him that the few decisions which were on record, pronounced heretical baptisms to be invalid. His letter perhaps produced an impression at Rome, for two of Stephen's clergy wrote to consult him upon the subject, and received letters in reply ; from which we may infer, that even at Rome the conduct of the bishop was not considered quite satisfactory.

A. D.
256.

Considerations of personal danger were likely now to put an end to religious controversy. The emperor Valerian, as I have already stated, had favoured the Christians before his accession to the empire, and had continued to do so for the four first years of his reign. He is said to have been more indulgent to them than any former emperor, and even his own household was filled with them^q. But in the year 257 he was persuaded to adopt a very different conduct. The author of this

A. D.
257.

^p Apud Eus. *H. E.* VII.
2, 5.

^q Dionys. *apud Eus. H. E.*
VII. 10.

A. D.
257.

Egypt, gained an influence with Macrianus, by promising him the empire; and it was to gratify them in return, that he persuaded the emperor to persecute the Christians^r. The latter were incessantly active in attacking and exposing the tricks and abominations, which formed part of the science of magic; and hence they raised against themselves a numerous body, which was always glad to see the Christians persecuted. The Quinquennalia, or fifth anniversary of the emperor's accession, would furnish an opportunity for these cruelties; and there is reason to think that they began first in the capital. It may be mentioned, that Plotinus, the Platonic philosopher, was now in Rome, having settled there and opened a school in the year 245. From what we know of his principles, he was likely to be no unwilling spectator of the sufferings of the Christians: and their enemies succeeded so well in their designs, that Stephen himself fell a victim in the month of August^s. If the character of this bishop has exhibited some traits which we should wish to have been corrected, we may perhaps forget them, when we find him thus resolutely maintaining his faith, even at the expense of his life^t. His successor was Xystus or Sixtus, the second of that name, who is said to have been an Athenian.

There does not appear, at the beginning of the persecution, to have been any positive edict issued by the emperor; and it is probable that he left

^r This has been called the ninth persecution

^s It is said by Socrates, that Novatian suffered martyrdom under Valerian, IV. 28. It was denied by Eulogius, patriarch

of Alexandria in the sixth century. *Photius*, cod 280.

^t For the doubts concerning his martyrdom, see Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. part. 1. p. 350.

Rome at the beginning of 258, to undertake an expedition into the East. An irruption of the Persians, on that side of the empire, had taken place about five or six years before, and he was now engaged in military preparations for attacking them. The example however, which had been set in the capital, was followed in the provinces; and the month of August, which had been fatal to the bishop of Rome, was also the prelude to those sufferings, which brought Cyprian to his end. The Christians in Africa had seen for some time that the storm was gathering. News would soon travel from Rome to Carthage; and Fortunatus, an African bishop, asked Cyprian to furnish those who were about to suffer, with some exhortations taken from the Scripture. Cyprian complied by publishing a work upon martyrdom, which is almost entirely composed of texts of Scripture. He was the first who was called to put his principles into practice. By the end of August, a message had come from the emperor to the proconsul Paternus, in which it was ordered, that all persons should adopt the religious ceremonies of Rome. Bishops and presbyters were specially mentioned, and the punishment of exile was appointed for those who disobeyed. It was also added, that private meetings should not be held, and that no person should enter the cemeteries^u. The directions were evidently given by some person, who was well acquainted with the habits of the Christians. Cyprian was accordingly brought before the proconsul, and having avowed his religion was banished to Curubis, a place about fifty miles from Carthage, in a desert and barren country.

A. D.
257.

^u Acta Cyprian.

A. D.
257.

The example set by the bishop was soon followed by numbers of his flock. Not only bishops and presbyters, but multitudes of the common people, even young women and children, were brought to trial for their religion. The emperor had not yet given orders for capital punishment to be inflicted: but these innocent persons were beaten, imprisoned, and sent to the mines in distant parts of Africa. The latter punishment was one, to which the Christians had long been condemned: and many of Cyprian's colleagues, bishops and their clergy, were now forced to work at that unwholesome labour. Cyprian himself appears to have been treated with less indignity, which was perhaps owing to his advanced age. A deacon named Pontius was allowed to accompany him, who afterwards wrote his life. His friends were not prohibited from visiting him; and he was able to send, not only letters, but money, to the Christians who were working in the mines*. His banishment at Curubis lasted for more than a twelvemonth, during which time he had opportunities of preaching the Gospel to large congregations of persons, who were attracted to the place of his retreat.

I should conjecture, that Valerian was not very active during the remainder of the year in persecuting the Christians. Macrianus had persuaded him to consent to such a measure, but he was now busily engaged in his military preparations. The first part of the pontificate of Xystus seems certainly to have been tranquil, and he had time to think of other matters beside those of personal danger. The

* See Epist. 77, 78, 79, 80.

biographer of Cyprian^y speaks of Xystus as a good and pacific bishop; expressions which were perhaps used in allusion to the unconciliating conduct of his predecessor Stephen. It is certain, that he received more than one letter from Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, concerning heretical baptisms^z. The Alexandrian church appears to have taken up the question, when it had ceased to be a subject of dispute between the churches of Rome and Carthage: but the letters of Dionysius are marked by a tone of moderation, and a love of peace and truth. With respect to his own practice, he mentions that he did not baptize persons, who came back again to the church, after having once belonged to it, and having fallen into heresy: and he states that he had received this custom from his predecessor Heraclas. He also wrote to Xystus, asking for his advice in the case of a man, who had been a member of the Alexandrian church for above twenty years, but who was now suffering great horror of mind from finding that he had not been baptized according to the forms of the catholic church. He was very anxious to be baptized over again; but Dionysius declined doing it, in consideration of his having held the true faith for so many years, and having so often partaken of the holy communion. It will be observed, that neither of these cases bears directly upon the question, which had been at issue between the churches of Rome and Carthage. That question was, whether a man who was known to have been baptized by heretics, and who wished to come over to the church, was to be baptized before his admis-

A. D.
257.^y Pontius, *vit. Cypr.*^z Eus. *H. E.* VII. 5. 9.

A. D. 257. sion : but in the first of the two cases mentioned by Dionysius, baptism had once been really and validly administered in the church ; and in the second case, a man had for many years held communion with the church, without it having been known that he had been baptized by heretics. Dionysius, however, could hardly have thought that Xystus felt as strongly upon the point as Stephen, or he would not have told him that he was afraid of doing wrong, in having refused baptism to this man. It was now also that he wrote to the two Roman presbyters, who had consulted him upon this controversy ; and he told them, as I have already mentioned, that former decisions were against heretical baptisms. It was this, which apparently decided his own mind ; and we may hope that his mild and temperate letters were not lost upon Xystus.

A. D. 258. These letters must have been written after the August of 257, and before the August of 258, for the pontificate of Xystus only lasted during that period. It seems probable also, that they were written while Dionysius was at liberty, and before the persecution had affected himself. At the same period he wrote to Xystus upon an affair of still greater importance. This was the heresy of Sabellius, which was now beginning to shew itself in Ptolemais, a district of Pentapolis. I have already anticipated this heresy, when speaking of Praxeas, Noetus, and Beryllus ; but the names of these persons have been obscured by the greater celebrity of Sabellius, who is said to have been a disciple of Noetus^a, and to have held the rank either of a

^a Augustin. *Hær.* XLI. vol. viii. p. 11. Philaster.

bishop^b or a presbyter^c. It is perhaps needless to repeat, that these heretics denied the personality of the Son and the Holy Ghost. They believed that God the Father was himself the Redeemer and Sanctifier of mankind: that the divinity of the Father resided in Jesus Christ, who had no separate existence before his appearance upon earth; and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are mere modes or operations of the one only God. If we seek for a difference between the theory of Sabellius and those of his predecessors, we are perhaps to say, that Noetus supposed the whole divinity of the Father to be inherent in Jesus Christ, whereas Sabellius supposed it to be only a part, which was put forth like an emanation, and was again absorbed in the Deity. Noetus acknowledged only one divine person; Sabellius divided this one divinity into three; but he supposed the Son and the Holy Ghost to have no distinct personal existence, except when they were put forth for a time by the Father^d. These opinions spread rapidly in that part of the Alexandrian diocese, which is called Pentapolis^e. Dionysius soon heard of it; and after some letters had passed upon the subject, he had the question discussed in his presence. He then delivered his own opinion in writing. Eusebius mentions four letters which were addressed by him to different persons^f: but it is probable that some of these

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258.

^b Timoth. Presb. *apud Coteler.* mistake.
Eccles. Græc. Monum. vol. iii.
p. 385.

^c Abulpharaj. *Hist. Dynast. Arab.* p. 81. He adds that Sabellius first appeared in Byzantium, which is probably a

^d See Bampton Lectures, Note 103. Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. sæc.* III. §. 33.

^e Eus. *H. E.* VII. 6.

^f *Ib.* 26.

A. D. 258. were written in subsequent years, when he found that the evil still continued to spread. We have seen that at this time there was frequent communication between the churches of Alexandria and Rome. During the short pontificate of Xystus, Dionysius wrote five letters to Rome upon the subject of heretical baptisms: and in the first of these, which was addressed to Xystus himself, he mentioned the heresy of Sabellius, as then beginning to appear. He also subjoined copies of the other letters which he had written. The subject was a difficult one; and he would naturally wish to know, whether he had rightly expounded the doctrine of the church. He perhaps communicated his letters to other bishops; but before he could have had time to collect their opinions, he found himself the object of heathen persecution.

This happened most probably in the spring of the year 258. Dionysius attended by some of his own clergy, and by some Christians lately arrived from Rome, was brought before Æmilianus the prefect of Egypt. The form of his examination was very similar to that which had been applied to Cyprian not many months before. No instructions seem as yet to have been sent out, which authorised the infliction of capital punishment, though this was the case later in the year. Æmilianus announced to them, in the name of the emperor, that they were to hold no meetings, nor frequent the cemeteries. He then asked Dionysius, whether he would worship the gods of Rome: and being answered in the negative, he told him that a place named Cephron, on the edge of the desert, was appointed for his banishment: all which exactly corresponds with what took

place at Carthage in the case of Cyprian. The time was gone by, when the meetings of Christians could be hindered by an edict. They might be banished, or put to death, but the progress of the Gospel could not be restrained. Such was found to be the case at Cephron, where Christianity had perhaps till then not been heard of; but heathen malice conveyed it even to that unfrequented spot. Dionysius and his party were received at first with stones and insults: but they had not been there long, before many of the heathen abandoned their idolatry; and together with the Christians who followed each other from Alexandria, they formed at last a numerous congregation. This induced Æmilianus to separate his prisoners, and remove them to still more unpleasant quarters. They were dispersed through different divisions of the Mareotic district, and Dionysius was sent to a place called Colluthion. This was nearer the city than Cephron, and seems to have been chosen, that the persons confined there might be more within reach of the governor. Dionysius was reconciled to the change, because he was brought so much nearer to his friends at Alexandria. His residence in this place appears to have continued for a considerable time.

A. D.
258.

LECTURE XXVII.

A. D.
258.

THE emperor had given the title of Augustus to his son Gallienus soon after his own accession. The names of both of them accordingly appeared in public edicts, and both of them gave authority for the persecution in 257. We may suspect however, though they did not oppose the wishes of Macrianus, that they did not take an active part in ill treating the Christians. Valerian appears to have set out for the Persian war in 258. He was at Byzantium and at Antioch in that year; and we know that while he was engaged in this war, he gave up the whole management of the empire to Macrianus^a. We might expect therefore, that the persecution would be carried on more in earnest when Valerian was in the East, than when he was at Rome. Such was the case. Gallienus was at this time engaged with the barbarians in Scythia, and probably knew nothing of the edicts to which his name was affixed. Macrianus attended Valerian in his Persian campaign; but he was able to send home a much more sanguinary order against the Christians than any which had yet been issued. It appears to have reached Rome in the middle of summer; and the terms of it were, that bishops, presbyters, and deacons, should be punished immediately with death;

^a Pollio *Macrian*.

but that senators and men of rank, and knights, should be degraded and lose their property, and if they still persisted in being Christians, they were to suffer capitally: women were to lose their property and be sent into banishment. If any persons connected with the imperial household^b had confessed before, or should confess now, that they were Christians, they were to have their property confiscated and to be sent abroad as prisoners^c.

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258.

Such was the purport of an official document transmitted by Valerian to the senate; subjoined to which was the copy of a letter, which he had written to the governors of provinces. The magistrates of Rome shewed no reluctance to execute this edict. Confiscations and deaths were very frequent; and on the sixth of August, Xystus the bishop, with four of his deacons, were martyred^d in one of the cemeteries, which now afforded places of concealment, as well as of religious worship, to the Christians. Laurentius, a deacon, is said to have suffered a few days afterwards. His name is very celebrated among the saints of the Romish calendar, and we may perhaps doubt whether he met his death by being broiled upon a gridiron: but it cannot be denied, that the testimony to his martyrdom is numerous and respectable^e. The martyrdom of Hippolytus is also placed at this period, and Ostia is made to be the scene of his sufferings: but the obscurity concerning

^b Valerian's household was filled with Christians at the beginning of his reign. Dionys. *apud Eus. H. E. VII.* 10.

^c Epist. Cypr. 82. See also Acta Nicephori, *apud Ruinart.* §. 3. p. 241.

^d Prudentius says that he

was crucified. Hymn. *de Coron.* II. 22.

^e See Baronius ad an. 261. num. VI. Kortholt. *de Persecut.* c. ix. §. 20. p. 406. Ruinart, p. 187. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. iv. p. 64.

A. D. 258. this person is so great, as I have already mentioned^f, that we cannot venture to say any thing more concerning him. We may infer that the same scene of cruelty was acted in different parts of the empire. Eusebius, who was born not many years after, and who was particularly interested in whatever concerned Cæsarea, has mentioned the names of three persons who were killed by wild beasts in that city^g. It seems extraordinary that Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, escaped with his life. A bishop named Germanus accused him afterwards of having been deficient in firmness at this trying time. He answered the charge in a work of some length^h; and his whole life forbids us to suspect him of doing any thing unworthy of a Christian bishop. His companions in banishment were equally fortunate in preserving their lives. Maximus, who was then a presbyter, succeeded him afterwards in the bishopric: Eusebius, who was a deacon, became bishop of Laodicea in Syria: and another deacon named Faustus lived to suffer martyrdom in the time of Diocletian. There were, however, many Christians of Alexandria, young and old, of both sexes, serving in the army, or in private stations, who were tortured in various ways and received their crown of martyrdom at the time of which we are speaking.

The most distinguished martyr in the present persecution was Cyprian. We left him at Curubis, at some distance from Carthage, to which place he had been sent in the August of the preceding year. He appears to have stayed there a twelve month; and a letter is extant, which he wrote upon receiving

^f Page 261.^g H. E. VII. 12.^h Ib. VI. 40. VII. 11.

news of the imperial decree, and of the death of Xystusⁱ. He was now in daily expectation of his end. Galerius Maximus had succeeded Paternus as proconsul, and Cyprian was removed from Curubis to a place near Carthage, which was once his own property. His friends advised him to fly, and pointed out places of concealment. This he steadily declined: but when an order came that he should go to Utica, he consented to hide himself for a time, that he might not die at a distance from his own flock^k. The arrival of the proconsul in the neighbourhood of Carthage gave him this melancholy satisfaction. He allowed himself to be taken before Galerius; and the interest excited in his behalf collected a great crowd both of Christians and heathens. There was evidently no fear on the part of the former to avow their attachment to Cyprian. The proconsul was armed with full powers against them, and yet he knew that they were standing in crowds round his tribunal. The fact may be difficult to explain, but the instances of it are numerous throughout this century^l. It proves beyond dispute, that the number of Christians had been rapidly increasing, and that the magistrates were well aware of the fact. There were, however, many persons interested in preserving the old religion; and though they could not bring back the multitudes who had left them, it appeared their best chance, and it at least gratified their malice, to cut off the leading men of the obnoxious party. It was thus that the bishops of Rome and Carthage were sacrificed. Cyprian's examination was short; and to avow himself a Christian, was to

ⁱ Epist. 82.^k Epist. 83.^l See Tillemont. *Mémoires*, tom. iv. part. 1. p. 10.

A. D. pronounce against himself the sentence of death.
 258. The proconsul condemned him to be beheaded, and the sentence was executed on the 14th of September. It has been observed, that he was the first bishop of Carthage who had suffered martyrdom.

If Valerian was a willing agent in the miseries which he brought upon the Christians, the disgraceful termination of his reign was a just and awful retribution. His Persian campaign ended in the spectacle, which had never yet been witnessed, of a Roman emperor being led in triumph by a barbarian prince. This was the fate of Valerian, who was taken prisoner at Edessa by Sapor the king of Persia, in the summer of 259, and continued in that condition for ten years till his death. It has been said, that Macrianus was concerned in betraying him to the Persians; and the suspicion is confirmed by his receiving the imperial title from the army in the East. He was also recognised in Egypt; but we read at this time of so many persons in different parts of the world, who bore the title of emperor, that Roman history becomes for some years a succession of usurpations and civil wars. There is, however, no occasion to follow these complicated events, except so far as they affected the fortunes of the church: and many of these upstart emperors may be passed over without receiving even a passing notice^m.

The legitimate emperor, as he might be called, was Gallienus, the son of Valerian, who, as I have already mentioned, had been associated with his father in the empire at the beginning of his reign.

^m Gibbon has some judicious remarks concerning the affection of making out the number of these *tyrants* to be exactly thirty. c. X.

His conduct upon his father's captivity confirms what was said above, of his having been made a passive instrument in ordering the persecution of the Christians. He now issued an edict to put a stop to their sufferings; and it seems to have taken effect wherever his authority was recognised. Macrianus, however, still adhered to his former measures; and, since his title was acknowledged in Egypt, Dionysius was not yet able to return to Alexandria. The whole of Christian Africa seems to have continued for some time longer in a state of suffering. Galerius, the proconsul, who had put Cyprian to death, died himself shortly after: but the receiver general of the province continued the same cruel system, and many of the leading clergy were tortured and killed. The names of several persons are recorded who suffered in Numidia; and the Christians in Spain appear to have shared a similar fate. Fructuosus, the bishop of Tarraco, was one of their most distinguished martyrs^u: but it is uncertain whether these events happened after the captivity of Valerian or before. We may infer from Eusebius^o, that Palestine was one of the countries where the authority of Macrianus was still productive of evil to the Christians.

The good effect of the edict of Gallienus was immediately felt in the capital. The see, which had been vacant for nearly a year since the death of Xystus, was filled up in July 259, by the election of Dionysius; the same person, who while he was a

A. D.
259.

^u For these martyrdoms in Africa and Spain see Baronius ad an. 262. Ruinart, p. 219. Fructuosus probably suffered, A. D. 259. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 461.

^o II. E. VII. 15.

- A. D. 259. presbyter of the Roman church, had corresponded with Dionysius of Alexandria upon the baptismal controversy. He appears to have been a man of considerable learning as well as piety : and from the absence of any materials for ecclesiastical history for the following year, we may hope that at least in Italy the Christians were without molestation. Gallienus was certainly favourable to them ; but through the whole of the year 260, his attention was likely to be engaged by the conflicting pretensions of rival emperors. Fortunately for the Christians, Macrianus and his two sons were put to death in 261 : and the authority of Gallienus being now recognised in Egypt, he wrote to Dionysius and some other bishops, extending to them the benefit of his former edict, and restoring to them the use of the cemeteries, or any other places used by them for religious worship^p. The catechetical school had probably for some time been much neglected. I have mentioned that Pierius, who had taken the charge of it in 247, was a personal sufferer during the late persecution ; and there is some evidence that as soon as it subsided, he removed to Rome^q. His place in the school was supplied by Theognostus^r, who was a profound admirer, if not a pupil, of Origen, and who left behind him many works in proof of his learning. Dionysius was now able to return to Alexandria ; but he was soon obliged to defend himself against

^p Eus. *H. E.* VII. 13.

^q Jerom says, *post persecutionem omne vitæ suæ tempus Romæ fuisse versatum* : (*Catal. Script.*) and he is generally supposed to speak of Diocletian's persecution, which did

not end till 313 : but the account which I have given, agrees better with the age of Pierius, and with his being succeeded by Theognostus.

^r Philip. Sidet. *apud Dodwell, Diss. ad Iren.* p. 488.

assailants of a different kind. I have mentioned that a bishop named Germanus accused him of not shewing sufficient fortitude at the time of his removal from the city. The answer which he published to this attack was perhaps satisfactory; but with the return of peace the Sabellian controversy brought him into further trouble. Alexandria was always a nursery for different opinions upon speculative points. It had been so with respect to heathen philosophy, and the Christians unhappily caught the contagion. It was most probably in the schools of Alexandria that Sabellius learnt to explain away the doctrine of the Trinity; and his specious arguments, when stated to the less educated and simple inhabitants of Pentapolis, found a ready admission among them. Dionysius, as we have seen, had tried to correct the mischief by publishing some letters, of which he sent copies to Xystus, bishop of Rome. The persecution did not put a stop to the spirit of controversy; and some of the letters, which he is said to have written during his absence from Alexandria^s, were perhaps directed against the tenets of Sabellius.

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261.

The dispute was likely to proceed still more warmly, when the edict of Gallienus had removed the fear of external annoyance: and it was probably in some part of the year 261, that information was given to Dionysius, bishop of Rome, against the orthodoxy of his namesake of Alexandria. Among the letters of the latter there were one or two addressed to Ammonius and Euphranor: and some expressions in them appeared to speak of the Son of God as a created being. It was said, that he had

^s Eus. *H. E.* VII. 20.

A. D. 261. not spoken of the Son as being of the same substance with the Father; and it is probable that these charges were spread against him in his own diocese, before any persons thought of mentioning them at Rome. As soon as he heard of them, he wrote a letter to refute them; but the bishop of Rome, who had not seen this letter, thought the matter of such importance, that he convened a synod to take it into consideration. This will not seem extraordinary, when we think of the frequent intercourse between the two cities. Christians from Alexandria would often be going to Rome; and if they were suspected of holding any heterodox opinions, their Roman brethren would have had scruples in admitting them to communion. It was therefore very desirable to know, whether a man of such celebrity for his learning, and bishop of such a distinguished see, as the Alexandrian Dionysius, was justly accused of holding heretical opinions concerning the Son of God. The Roman synod did not feel satisfied; which is a proof that at this time the Church of Rome was alike opposed to the Sabellian hypothesis, and to the notion of Jesus Christ being a creature. A letter was accordingly written by the Roman Dionysius to his brother of Alexandria; but while the discussion had been going on, the latter city had again become disturbed by political dissensions.

Towards the end of the year 261 Æmilianus, the governor of Egypt, was induced to assume the title of emperor. The army, which was disinclined to Gallienus, supported him, and in a short time he had possession of the whole of Egypt, and the Thebaid. Alexandria was the only place where his

authority was disputed. The inhabitants had always entered with violence into political quarrels^t; and before the Easter of 262 they had made the city a scene of warfare and bloodshed. Dionysius uses the strong expression, that it would have been easier at that time to have travelled from the east to the west, than to have gone from one part of Alexandria to another^u. He speaks of places in the heart of that populous city being entirely deserted; and we may form some notion of the real state of things, when we find that the bishop, who wished to address his clergy previous to Easter, was obliged to do it by letter, and found a difficulty in conveying it when it was written. It does not appear that the spirit of party raised the usual feeling of hostility against the Christians; but the Christians were themselves divided in their political sentiments; and while some took part with Æmilianus, others supported Gallienus. Dionysius however was still so attentive to his duties, as to write on the subject of Easter to an Egyptian bishop; and it was probably in the midst of these scenes of anarchy, that he contrived to send an answer to the letter of the bishop of Rome. He asked in the first place, that he might be furnished with a copy of the charges brought against him. He then mentioned the letter which he had already written in his defence, and lamented that the circumstances of the times made it impossible for him to transmit a copy to Rome. The letter had probably been sent into Pentapolis as soon as it was written; and Dionysius, having kept no copy of it, was not able at present to send a messenger from the city. This would certainly have been the case

A. D.
262.

^t Herodian. IV. 15.

^u Apud Eus. *H. E.* VII. 21.

A. D.
262.

at some period of the present year, when Alexandria was besieged by Theodotus, one of Gallienus' generals. It might have been possible to communicate with Rome by sea, but the city would be sure to be invested on the land side, that Æmilianus might not be assisted from his friends in Egypt. Before the end of the year the city surrendered; and Æmilianus being taken prisoner, the whole of Egypt submitted to Gallienus.

Dionysius having received a statement of the objections which were made to his doctrines, drew up a work in four books, entitled, *Refutation and Defence*, and transmitted it to the bishop of Rome. Some few fragments of this work have been preserved to us, from which it appears that the charges against Dionysius were entirely groundless. In the following century his authority was claimed by the Arians, as being on their side; and we might be satisfied of the falsehood of this claim, when we find a defence of him written by Athanasius, his successor in the see of Alexandria, and the great opponent of the Arians. It must be remembered, that at the time when Dionysius wrote, the Arian controversy had not yet been heard of; and he may have used some expressions, which a writer of the fourth century would have avoided, as being then capable of two meanings. In exposing the errors of Sabellius, and in proving that God the Son was not actually the same with God the Father, he had dwelt very strongly upon those passages of Scripture which shew the human nature of Christ. In arguing that the Father and the Son are not one and the same Being, he had observed, incautiously perhaps, and irrelevantly, that a tree is not the same

with the person who plants it, nor a ship with the person who builds it. From these and other expressions it was inferred, that he meant to speak of the Son as made or created by the Father. But he said in reply, that whenever he spoke of the-Son being *made*, he spoke with reference to his human nature; and he referred to other illustrations which he had used, such as a stem growing from a root, and a river flowing from its spring; where the stem and the river are of the same nature with the root and the spring, though they are not actually the same. With respect to the Son being of one substance with the Father, he acknowledged that he had not happened to use the word *consubstantial*, which, as he says, does not occur in the Scriptures; but he contended, that all the notions which are attached to the term, are implied in many passages of his letters, as in the two instances already adduced of the stem and its root, the river and its spring, and in the analogy to which he had referred of a human son being necessarily of the same substance or nature with his father.

A. D.
262.

It seems strange that the Arians should ever have felt anxious to press the authority of Dionysius as favourable to themselves: for though he was denounced to the bishop of Rome as heretical, this very fact shews that the belief of the Catholic church was contrary to that which the Arians supposed Dionysius to have held. If Dionysius was called to account for speaking of Jesus Christ as *a creature*, it seems to follow of course that the Catholic church did not believe him to be a creature: so that if the accusations against Dionysius were true, he was undoubtedly heretical; or if they were

A. D. 253. not true, he was not an Arian. It is also to be observed, that the charge brought against him of not considering the Son to be of one substance with the Father, is a convincing proof that the church in that day held this belief; and unless a man was prepared to acknowledge it, he was liable to be denounced as maintaining heretical tenets. Whatever *Dionysius* may have written in his first publications upon the Sabellian controversy, it is demonstrable from his *Refutation and Defence*, that he held the divinity of the Son, and his consubstantiality with the Father, in the fullest and highest sense of which those words are capable. If he is to be suspected of error at all, he perhaps came nearer to what was afterwards known by the name of the Nestorian heresy, and which made a complete separation between the divine and human natures of Christ. But such a theory had not been heard of in the time of *Dionysius*; and the bishop would perhaps have altered some of his expressions, if he had been aware of the inferences which might have been drawn from them. The sentiments of the church upon these mysterious points may also be gathered from a few fragments of a work written against Sabellius by *Dionysius* bishop of Rome^x. He appears to have published several works, none of which have come down to us.

The bishop of Alexandria was not the only writer of these times, who has been falsely suspected of holding heretical tenets. Gregory, bishop of Neocæsarea, in Pontus, had written a book against *Ælianus*, an heathen, who had accused the Christians of believing in a plurality of Gods. The charge was

^x Apud Athanas. *de Decret. Syn. Nic.* c. 26. p. 231.

founded upon the fact of divine worship being paid to the Son and the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Father; and if the work of Ælianus was extant, it would furnish a strong proof that the doctrine of the Trinity was held by the Christians in the middle of the third century. Gregory published an answer to this attack; and in attempting to explain to the heathen, that the Father and the Son were one in *hypostasis*, i. e. in substance or essence, he appeared to say, that they were not two really, but only metaphysically. The Sabellians claimed this explanation as favouring their own views; but Basil, who has preserved this information, and who had read Gregory's treatise, has assured us that the assertion was entirely unfounded^y. He states that the doctrines which Gregory had taught, had contributed materially to check Sabellianism; and if the fact had been otherwise, his memory would certainly not have been so cherished in the church at large.

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The Christians in Alexandria had enjoyed but a short repose from the horrors of civil war, when they were visited by the pestilence which had now for ten years been afflicting various parts of the world. It seems to have been the custom of Dionysius to publish a kind of pastoral charge every year, at the approach of Easter; and in 262, (the year following the siege,) he describes the plague as committing dreadful ravages. As was usual in such calamities, the conduct of the Christians, when contrasted with that of the heathen, was very striking. The bishop does not pretend to say that the former were preserved by any miraculous interference: on

^y Epist. CCXX. 5. p. 316.

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262.

the contrary he states distinctly that they suffered severely: but the deaths were perhaps made more numerous by the affection of friends and relations, who, wholly regardless of contagion, persisted in rendering every office to the sick and dying: whereas the recklessness of the heathen, and their cruel neglect of each other in their last extremities, were sadly apparent. We have seen that this had the effect, in Pontus, of inducing many of the heathen to embrace Christianity; and we may hope that Dionysius, after his numerous troubles and vexations, had the consolation of witnessing this happy result in his own diocese.

The eastern part of the empire had been suffering from another scourge, which appears to have begun in the same year with the pestilence. This was the irruption of the Goths and other barbarous nations into several provinces of the empire. Asia Minor was overrun by these savage invaders, who, while they swept through the country like a torrent, carried away with them as prisoners many of the inhabitants. It has been observed that this circumstance conduced in the end to a rapid extension of the Gospel. Christians and heathens were alike exposed to these predatory incursions, and many of the clergy were carried into the countries from whence the invaders came. A writer of the fifth century^z who has mentioned the circumstance, states that many of the heathen were converted by seeing the miraculous cures and exorcisms performed by the Christians. He adds, which will perhaps gain more

^z Sozomen. II. 6. See also The latter says that the celebrated Ulphilas was descended from these prisoners.
Paul. Diac. *Hist. Miscel.* X.
14. Philostorg. *H. E.* II. 5.

general credence, that the pious life and amiable conduct of these men contributed to produce the same happy effects. A Cappadocian named Eutyches has obtained particular mention, as being instrumental in these conversions^a. There is good evidence that the nations on the banks of the Danube were among the number of those who received the Gospel; and the writer quoted above mentions also the Gallic or German tribes which lived upon the Rhine and extended to the Ocean: but the conversion of these people at as early a period as the third century requires confirmation. It cannot however be doubted that these repeated incursions of barbarous tribes were productive of much misery and of many fatal consequences to the Christians as well as to the heathen. A letter is extant of Gregory of Neocæsarea, in Pontus, from which it appears that many Christians had entirely forgotten the religion which they professed; and had rather copied the licentious manners of their invaders, than endeavoured to bring them over to a purer creed^b. The times were well calculated to try the faith of such imperfect believers. There must also have been many faithful servants of Christ, who felt the bitterness of slavery in a foreign land. We may hope that these cases were another means of impressing the heathen with a favourable notion of the Gospel. The church of Rome, as we have already seen^c, had been distinguished from an early period for sending relief to the Christians of other countries, who were in a state of suffering. The opportunity for such charitable contributions was now very pressing; and Dionysius, the

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^a Basil. Epist. 164. p. 255. vol. II. p. 437.

^b Apud Routh. *Rel. Sacr.* ^c Lecture XIX. page 164.

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bishop of Rome, excited his flock to make a subscription for the ransom of Christian prisoners, who had been carried away from Cappadocia^d. The letter which he wrote to the church of Cæsarea in that country was read publicly in the congregations in the time of Basil, that is, in the fourth century; which shews that such acts of kindness were not apt to be forgotten: and there is no reason to conclude that the Roman church stood alone in contributing to the ransom of Christian prisoners.

There seemed however to be a fatality attending the Alexandrian diocese, which hindered it from enjoying peace. Heretical opinions and civil dissensions, either conjointly or alternately, kept the Christians in a perpetual state of disquiet: and now when political rivalry had ceased, a new agitation was excited in religion by a revival of the doctrine of a millennium. I have mentioned, when speaking of Papias, that not only this disciple of the apostles, but Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, had also professed a belief that Christ was to reign upon earth for a thousand years previous to the general resurrection. It must be remembered, however, that this was a very different notion from that of Cerinthus, who made the joys of this terrestrial kingdom to be of a gross and sensual kind. Some opinion of this sort prevailed in Arsinoitis, a district of Egypt, for a considerable period. Disputes and dissensions upon the subject were becoming frequent, and Nepos a bishop wrote

^d Basil. Epist. 70. p. 164.
This is understood of Dionysius of Rome by Baronius and Tillemont: and there can be no

doubt upon the subject, if the Letter was addressed to Pope Damasus.

a book which obtained great popularity, and which rather supported the Cerinthian notion of a millennium. The work was entitled, A Confutation of the Allegorists: and the allegorical method of interpretation, which was carried to such lengths by Origen, had perhaps contributed to lessen the expectation of Christ's terrestrial kingdom. Nepos and the millenarians of his party were for taking the expressions of scripture in their literal sense: and though their views appear to have been different from those which had been hitherto entertained^e, they probably went much farther than they ought in anticipating the joys which awaited them hereafter. Dionysius now thought it time to interfere. Nepos himself was dead; but his book was considered unanswerable by his party; and the bishop convened all the clergy in the country, who took an interest in the question. The discussion lasted three whole days; and it is pleasing to read of the good temper and love of truth which seemed to animate all parties. At length Coracion, who was the leader of the millenarians, professed himself convinced: he pledged himself never to preach such doctrines again; as did all those who had before agreed with him^f. It is plain therefore, that the Alexandrian church at this time did not believe in a millennium: and the doctrine may have become unpopular by having been embraced by the Marcionites, and still more recently by the Montanists. The latter heretics, as I have already mentioned^g, were perhaps the cause that Caius, a writer of the Roman church,

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262.

^e Gennadius Massil. *de Eccles. Dogmat.* c. 55. p. 32.

^f Dionys. *ap. Eus. H. E.* VII. 24.

^g Page 270.

A. D. 262.

opposed the notion of a millennium at the beginning of this century. Dionysius delivered his opinion more publicly in a work in two books *upon the Promises*: and from this time forward we find few writers of any note who defended the doctrine.

A. D. 265. Egypt unfortunately was not the only country, in which bold and unauthorized speculations were made into the mysteries of the Gospel. In the year 265 a council was held at Antioch, which excited more general interest, and was attended by bishops from more distant dioceses, than any former synod. Paul, a native of Samosata, was at this time bishop of Antioch, having succeeded Demetrianus in 260^h; and his own opinions concerning the nature of Jesus Christ were the cause of this numerous council being assembled. If we may believe the account which was given by the bishops, his contemporaries, heretical pravity was only one in a catalogue of enormities, which disgraced the character of Paul. He is represented as rapacious and fraudulent in amassing wealth; proud and haughty in his demeanour; and even openly licentious in his moral conduct. We may suppose the charges to be exaggerated; but there is a statement of facts concerning his ostentation and arrogance, which shews beyond dispute, that Christianity had now assumed a position at Antioch, which no efforts of heathenism could de-

^h It seems to have been in this year, that Antioch was taken by the victorious Sapor, and many thousands of the inhabitants massacred. (*Zosim.* I. 27. p. 36. *Ammian. Marcell.* XXIII. 5.) If Demetrianus was among the number of the slain, it is possible that Paul may

have been appointed in a moment of confusion, when the soundness of his tenets was not considered. It seems certain from his future history, that the Christians in Antioch did not take part with the Persians.

stroy. Paul appeared in public, with a crowd of attendants preceding and following him; he was fond of displaying his retinue in the market-place: he walked about dictating letters upon business; and had a tribunal for hearing causes, where he expected his decisions to be received with clamorous applauseⁱ. The imitation of official grandeur in all this may have excited ridicule; but it is plain that the time was gone by, when a Christian was afraid of avowing his religion; and there is reason to think that Paul was at this time filling a civil station of some consequence in the city^k. We may be surprised, that such things could have happened at Antioch, where the authority of Macrianus had been so lately acknowledged: but this perhaps is only an additional proof, that the final triumph of Christianity could not be long delayed: and we shall see presently, that the Romans were not at this time the only persons who had the patronage of civil appointments in Antioch.

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265.

In addition to all this secular pomp, the bishop of Antioch had become heretical in an important article of faith. The official document already quoted represents him as following the heresy of Artemas. We have seen that Artemas, like his predecessor Theodotus, believed Jesus Christ to be a mere man, and denied his preexistence, though he allowed his miraculous conception. Paul agreed with Artemas so far as to believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus, and to deny his preexistence; but his creed was much more metaphysical; and it is plain, that

ⁱ Epist. Concil. Antioch. *apud* Eus. H. E. VII. 30. tor Ducenarius. See Mosheim. *de Rebus ante Const. Sæc. III.*

^k He was probably Procura- §. 35. p. 704.

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265.

he had meddled with the mysticism of the later Platonists. He did not refuse to call Christ God ; and though he believed him to have been born a mere man, he acknowledged that something divine resided in him after his birth. This may account for the doctrines of Paul being said by some of the ancients to resemble those of the Ebionites ; for the latter supposed, that *Christ*, an emanation from God, was united to *Jesus* after his baptism. This however was not the notion of Paul concerning the divinity inherent in Jesus Christ. He had recourse to the philosophy of Plato, and taught that Jesus Christ was the external manifestation of the Logos or Reason of God. This Logos had no personal preexistence, distinct from God himself, but was put forth by God after the birth of Jesus ; and Christ was the result of this union of Jesus with the Logos¹. There is an evident resemblance between this hypothesis and that of Sabellius, as was pointed out by many of the Fathers ; but it does not appear, that the doctrine of the Logos entered so openly into the system of Sabellius. The fundamental error of Paul was to deny that Christ had any distinct personal existence, before the time when Jesus was born from Mary : but it will be seen that he by no means believed Jesus Christ to be a mere human being, in the modern sense of that expression. His impiety was most extravagant, if as is asserted in the letter of the council, he forbade the singing of hymns in honour of Jesus Christ, and yet allowed others to be sung, which spoke of himself as an angel that came down from

¹ Concerning the tenets of Paul of Samosata, I would refer to my Bampton Lectures, note 102.

heaven. We may hope, however, that this charge was founded on some mistake.

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That the bishop of so great a see as Antioch should be accused of heresy, was a new event in the annals of the church. Dionysius of Alexandria had been denounced to his namesake of Rome; and if he had not cleared himself by his publications, the bishops of the western churches would perhaps have deliberated upon his case. Rome would then have been the properest place for the assembling of a council. But Antioch was at a great distance from Rome; and there is no evidence, that the bishop of Rome or any European bishop, was invited to attend on the present occasion. The matter required a numerous meeting; and among the persons who sat in judgment upon Paul, we find the names of some of the most distinguished prelates of the third century. Firmilianus of Cappadocia, Gregory and Athenodorus of Pontus, and Helenus of Tarsus, have already attracted our attention. There were present also Hymenæus, who had lately succeeded Mazabanes as bishop of Jerusalem, Theotecnus of Cæsarea in Palestine, Nicomas of Iconium, and Maximus of Bostra in Arabia, beside many other bishops and presbyters. Dionysius of Alexandria was requested to attend, but he was obliged to plead his great age and bodily infirmity as an excuse. He had held a correspondence with the bishop of Antioch upon the subject, and he now wrote a letter to the council, in which he refuted ten propositions that had lately been published by Paul. He did not think proper to send his answer to Paul himself, though it was addressed to him; but he sent it to the council, as containing his recorded sentiments, which he was not able to

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deliver in person. The letter is still extant^m: and this transaction was probably the last, in which Dionysius was engaged; for he died a few days after writing the letterⁿ, having filled the see of Alexandria nearly twenty years. His successor was Maximus, who had been a sharer in his sufferings during the persecution of Valerian.

It might be inferred from the words of Eusebius^o, that there were several meetings upon this subject; or he may mean, that the bishops assembled at Antioch held many different sessions. Firmilianus certainly appears to have gone twice to Antioch^p: and it being generally the custom for the oldest bishop to preside at these councils^q, it is probable that this distinction was given at present to Firmilianus. Others have thought, that the place of president was held by Helenus of Tarsus^r. The supporters of Paul were accused afterwards of having managed the conference with great subtilty. They endeavoured to involve their meaning in equivocal expressions, so as to escape detection. Paul even went so far as to promise to alter his opinions: and Firmilianus, who wished to avoid the scandal of an open rupture, advised the council to make no decision for the present. Paul

^m It has been pronounced spurious by Valesius, because the letter of the council says that Dionysius ἐπέστειλεν εἰς τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν, τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῆς πλάνης οὐδὲ προσήσεως ἀξιῶσιν· οὐδὲ πρὸς πρόσωπον γράψας αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ τῇ παροικίᾳ πάση (Eus. H. E. VII. 30.) whereas the work in question appears to be addressed to Paul: but I conceived that the words reported by Eusebius will

bear the construction which I have put upon them. See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 886.

ⁿ Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

^o H. E. VII. 28.

^p Ib. 30.

^q Τῶν τε κατὰ Πόντον ἐπισκόπων, ὧν Πάλμας ὡς ἀρχαιότατος προυτέτακτο. Eus. H. E. V. 23.

^r Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 895.

therefore continued bishop of Antioch : and as far as might be inferred from any expressed declarations, the divinity and preexistence of Christ were doctrines held unanimously by all the eastern churches : but we shall see presently, that the unanimity, which the council had hoped to enforce, was no more than specious.

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Other bishops who attended the council, beside Firmilianus, were now at an advanced age. It seems probable, that the two brothers Gregory and Athenodorus did not long survive : and we might believe the stories which are told of Gregory's miracles, if it could be proved that at the time of his death he left only seventeen heathen in his diocese. Such is the statement of his biographer^s, who wrote at the end of the following century : but our suspicions will perhaps be increased, when we find it added, that this was the exact number of Christians whom he had found upon entering on his diocese. It seems incredible, that a bishop should have been appointed to a congregation of only seventeen persons : but the name of Gregory would not have become so celebrated, if he had not exerted himself successfully in converting the heathen ; and we must remember that a diocese, or as it was then called, a parish, was confined in those days to a single city and the district round it. I have already expressed my doubts as to the reality of the miracles ascribed to Gregory. It is the frequency and stupendous nature of them, which cause them to be rejected : but I would again repeat what has been said upon this subject, that there is no evidence of miraculous powers having en-

^s Greg. Nyss. *vit. Greg. Thaum.* p. 574. *Basil. de Spir. Sanct.* XXIX. 74.

A. D. 265. tirely disappeared in the third century. It might rather be thought that some traces of them still remained: and if God thought fit to continue occasionally these attestations to the truth of the Gospel, the conversion of the barbarians who overran Asia in the time of Gregory, might appear a suitable cause for such interpositions.

These invasions appear to have been the only inconvenience which the Christians sustained in the reign of Gallienus; and they affected the heathen as much as themselves. The pestilence ended in 267, having continued its ravages for fifteen years. The Platonists were perhaps at this time the most zealous and the most sincere opponents of the Gospel. But it was the war of the pen, in which they were principally engaged. I have mentioned that Plotinus settled in Rome in 245, where he continued till his death in 270. His school acquired great celebrity; and one of his pupils was Amelius, who is quoted by many of the Fathers^t, as having attempted to reconcile the opening of St. John's Gospel with the language of Plato. In 262 the school of Plotinus received a powerful accession in Porphyry, a native of Tyre, who had studied under Longinus, a Platonic philosopher at Athens, and now came to Rome, where he continued nearly six years, and then went into Sicily. He was one of the bitterest enemies that the Gospel ever encountered, and wrote a work against it in twenty-one books^u. He also published a life of Pythagoras, which, like the life of Apollonius already mentioned^x, was intended as a covert attack

^t Eus. *Præp. Evang.* XI. 19. p. 540. Cyril. Alex. in *Julian.* VIII. p. 283. Theodoret. *Serm.* II. ad *Græcos*, vol. IV. p. 500.

^u See Holstenius, *vit. Porphy.* c. 11.

^x Lecture XXII. page 253.

upon Christianity. Pythagoras was represented as having worked stupendous miracles, and as having imparted the same power to Empedocles, Epimenides, and others; by which means it was thought that the argument in favour of the divine origin of Christianity might be weakened^y. Methodius, bishop of Tyre, is known to have written an answer to the attacks of Porphyry^z, but his work has long since perished. It was perhaps fortunate, that these later Platonists had become so mystical in their sentiments and so obscure in their language, that the initiated only could understand their writings. It was impossible, that general readers could enter into the question, whether the Platonic Trinity and that of the Christians was the same. Plotinus and Porphyry affirmed this agreement; and since the Christians (with a few exceptions) were not disposed to deny it, the controversy perhaps diminished, rather than increased, the prejudice against them. At the same time the Platonic philosophers were likely to retard the spreading of the Gospel, by always speaking of it with contempt, and by trying to prove that it was merely a corruption of Platonism. But notwithstanding this the Christians were gainers, by having to meet the arguments of philosophers, instead of the fire and sword of persecutors.

With respect to external persecution, they seem to have been free from it, from the death of Macrianus in 261, to the end of the reign of Gallienus. This emperor, who favoured them from the first, was not likely to provoke the hostility of so numerous a body, when every year raised up some new claimant for the

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^y See Kusterus in *Iamblich. vit. Pythag.* c. II. p. 7. c. XIX. p. 78. ^z Hieron. *Epist.* LXX. 3. p. 425. Philostorg. VIII. 14.

- A. D. 267. empire. The existence of these rival parties was perhaps favourable to the Christians. Gallienus appears to have been a weak prince, and we may wonder that he was able to stand so long against so many competitors. If any one of his opponents could have induced the others to withdraw, he would probably have gained the empire: but Gallienus preserved the shadow of authority by the number of his rivals. He ought perhaps, according to Roman notions, to have avenged the insults and captivity of his father; but the secret was now discovered, that the power of Rome was unable to cope with Persia. Odenatus, a citizen of Palmyra, was more courageous, and having quarrelled with the Persians, he invaded their country, and marched to the walls of Ctesiphon. Gallienus immediately gave him the title of emperor, and in fact surrendered to him the government of the East. The measure was politic, though a melancholy confession of Roman weakness. The new emperor followed up his conquests, and gratified the vanity of Gallienus by sending him some Persian satraps to adorn a triumph which was celebrated at Rome. The spectators of this pageantry did not fail to observe, that while Gallienus was triumphing for victories over Persia, his father was wearing out his days as a prisoner in that country. This partition of the empire took place in 264, and in 267 Odenatus with his eldest son Herod was put to death. His remaining sons being too young to succeed, the sovereignty of Palmyra and his other titles to empire were assumed by his masculine and high-minded queen Zenobia. In the following year Gallienus was persuaded by two of his generals, Claudius Martianus and Cecropius, to go against Aureolus, who was
- A. D. 268.

making himself formidable in the north of Italy. A. D. 268.
 The advice turned out to be treacherous; and the feeble Gallienus, as well as his brother Valerian, were put to death by the conspirators at Milan. Claudius was rewarded by having the imperial title conferred upon him by the soldiers, which was shortly ratified by the senate. If he began a persecution of the Christians at Rome, as is asserted by Baronius^a, we might conjecture that he found them disposed to honour the memory of Gallienus, who had certainly favoured them: but there are good reasons for thinking that no systematic persecution took place in the reign of Claudius^b, though some individuals may have suffered martyrdom^c: and the unsettled state of the empire, both from competitors for the throne, and from incursions of barbarians, was more than sufficient to find the emperor constant employment.

In the first year of his reign his authority was recognised at Alexandria, where part of the city was held by the forces of Zenobia, and had been a long time besieged by the Romans, who had possession of the remainder. Two Christians, Anatolius and Eusebius, were able on this occasion to render essential service to their fellow citizens. Anatolius had cultivated every branch of learning with success. Philosophy, mathematics, dialectics, rhetoric, were all explained by him to his pupils: and at the request of many persons he became the founder of an Aristotelian school of philosophy^d. Whether he saw

^a Ad an. 269, 270.

^b See Pagi, *ad Baron. l. c.*

^c See Lupius, *Comm. ad epistaph. Severæ*, §. 2. p. 6. Tille-

mont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 913.

^d Eus. *H. E.* VII. 32. Valerius considers him to be the

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the mistake which so many Christians had made in admitting the conclusions of the later Platonists, we are not informed : but the revival of the Aristotelian system was an epoch in the history of philosophy, and perhaps counteracted in some measure the evil which Platonism had caused to the Gospel. During the time of the siege, Anatolius was living in that part of the city which was called Bruchium, and the inhabitants were reduced to great suffering for want of food. In the other part of the city, which was occupied by the Romans, there was a Christian named Eusebius, who had distinguished himself some years before by burying the dead bodies of the martyrs, or attending them previously in prison^e. He had now gained great influence with the Roman commander ; and being in communication with Anatolius, he obtained a promise that all deserters from the other side should be favourably received. Anatolius being informed of this, contrived that nearly all the people who were suffering from the siege should escape to the quarters of the Romans, and when they arrived there, Eusebius supplied them with what they wanted. The surrender of Bruchium to the Romans, which took place in this year, was probably hastened by the successful issue of this scheme : and all the inhabitants of Alexandria, as well as the besieging army, must have felt themselves indebted to these two Christians. Not long after they went upon a mission to Antioch, which caused a great change in their future destinations.

same Anatolius, who is spoken of by Eunapius as the first philosopher of his day after

Porphyry, and to have had Iamblichus for his pupil.

^e Ib. 11.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE forbearance, which had been shewn by the council of Antioch in 265, produced no effect upon the heretical bishop. He soon forgot his promises, and spread his erroneous tenets as industriously as before. Another council was accordingly summoned in 269. Some of the bishops who had met on the former occasion were now dead; but we recognise the names of Hymenæus of Jerusalem, Helenus of Tarsus, Nicomas of Iconium, Theotecnus of Cæsarea, and Maximus of Bostra. The names of other bishops are also mentioned^a, and Firmilianus was again requested to attend from Cappadocia. The old man set out and travelled as far as Tarsus, where he died. The whole number of persons assembled at the council is differently stated. Some accounts make them as many as 180^b, others not more than 80^c, or even 70^d; and we may reconcile these variations, either by supposing that several who attended at first, went away before the council was finished; or that the bishops only, who amounted to 70 or 80, signed the final sentence, whereas several presbyters and deacons were present at the deliberations. A presbyter named Malchion took a leading part in

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269.

^a Eus. *H. E.* VII. 30.

^c Hilarius *de Synodis*, 86.

^b Concil. Ephes. c. XVII. p. 1200.

p. 1335. ed. Lab.

^d Athanas. *de Syn.* p. 757.

A. D. 269. the discussion. He was the chief teacher in a school of philosophy at Antioch : which shews that in that city, as well as at Alexandria, the heathen had no objections to receive secular instruction from a Christian ; and we cannot but conclude, that this toleration was the cause, in many cases, of conversions to the Gospel. Malchion was perhaps particularly suited by his previous habits to detect the subtilty and sophistry of Paul : and we learn something of the proceedings of early councils, when we find that the questions put by Malchion to Paul were taken down by shorthand writers, and afterwards published. Two other presbyters who attended the council were Anatolius and Eusebius, who must have gone to Antioch very soon after the service which they had rendered to their fellow-citizens at Alexandria. We are not informed whether the bishop of that see was invited to attend as in the former case : but it is certain, that he was not personally present, and he may have sent these two distinguished presbyters to represent him.

One of the first acts of the council was to address a letter to Paul, which is still extant, in which they give a summary of their religious creed. The matter is discussed at much length, with frequent reference to passages of Scripture ; and they state explicitly, that such belief had been preserved in the catholic church from the time of the apostles to that day. Nothing can be plainer than their assertions of the essential divinity of Christ ; his eternal pre-existence ; his creation of the world ; his relation to God as a son, not as a creature ; and his miraculous incarnation. Such, we are told, was the belief of the whole catholic church in the middle of the third

century. It has been observed however, both in A. D. 269.
 ancient and modern times, that the bishops assembled at Antioch did not speak of the Son as of one substance with the Father; by which is merely meant, that they did not use the word *consubstantial*; for the doctrine, which is contained in that word, is clearly implied in the exposition of their faith. It becomes therefore very immaterial, whether that particular term was used or no; and there is as little use as there is fairness in the remark, that the council of Antioch was opposed to the council of Nice upon that point. The two councils were perfectly unanimous, as has often been shewn^e; and if the word *consubstantial* was purposely omitted at the council of Antioch, it was perhaps in consequence of the word being perverted by the followers of Paul. We have seen that the bishop of Alexandria, about ten years before, had been obliged to explain himself for having omitted to use the word *consubstantial*. It is therefore highly improbable that the whole church, in so short a period, should have changed its mind concerning the doctrine implied in this term. The fact seems to be, that one way by which Paul hoped to conceal his heresy, was by using terms which were those of the catholic church. On this principle he may have spoken of Jesus Christ as consubstantial with God^f; meaning that the Logos or Reason of God, which was part of his substance or essence, was united to the man Jesus. It is not improbable, that he insisted upon

^e See Bull, *Def. Fid. Nic. II.* 1. 9. Præf. ad Dionys. Alex. Op. ed. Romæ. The contrary is expressly said by Marius Mercator, *Op.* p. 165. ed. 1684.

^f Hilar. *de Syn.* 86. p. 1200.

A. D. 269. this term as supporting his own view of the divinity of Christ; and the bishops would therefore rather avoid using it, though at the same time they speak of Jesus Christ as a begotten Son, and God in essence and in substance. Others again have said that Paul did not use the term, but objected to his accusers, that if they believed the Father and the Son to be consubstantial, they must believe that there was a common substance prior to them both, of which they both partook. It has been thought that this was the cause of the term *consubstantial* not being used by the council of Antioch; but on the other hand there are good grounds for concluding that neither of these hypotheses is correct; that the controverted term was not used by Paul; and that so far from its being rejected by the council, it was actually used in more than one document officially published by the council^g.

The letter seems to have produced no effect upon Paul; and after many examinations and discussions, he was pronounced excommunicated from the whole catholic church, and deposed from his station of bishop of Antioch. The person appointed to succeed him was Domnus, who was son of Demetrianus, the predecessor of Paul: which is another proof that the clergy at this time were not prohibited from marrying. It was now essential that the decision of the council should be known, that distant churches might not inadvertently hold communion with a man, who was in fact no longer a member of the church. There could hardly be

^g My reasons for this opinion are published by Mr. Faber, in his *Apostolicity of Trinitarianism*, vol. II. Append. I.

occasion to send this notice to any place in Asia, for the whole extent of that continent from Arabia to Pontus had sent deputies to the council; but we have seen, that on questions of much less moment there was a close intercourse kept up between the churches of Asia and of Europe; and though no European bishop appears to have attended either of the councils of Antioch, it was very desirable that the final sentence should be made known in the West. Accordingly a letter was drawn up by Malchion, addressed to Dionysius bishop of Rome, Maximus bishop of Alexandria, and to all bishops, priests, and deacons, representing the catholic church throughout the world. It gave an account of the proceedings of both councils, and ended with announcing the excommunication and deposition of Paul. The council evidently thought itself competent to come to this decision, without consulting any other churches; and the object of the letter, as stated at the end, is to tell the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, and all other bishops, that Domnus, and not Paul, was the person with whom they must hold communion as bishop of Antioch.

The inability of the church to enforce its own decrees, when not supported by the civil power, is strikingly exemplified in the sequel of the history of Paul. Domnus was clearly the only legitimate bishop of Antioch, and at least seventy bishops had pronounced Paul to be deposed; but the unsettled state of the eastern portion of the empire rendered this sentence in some measure of no effect. Paul had seen the policy of paying court to Zenobia, rather than to the feeble remnant of Roman authority in the East. This extraordinary woman had

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269.

cultivated learning, as well as other qualities which fitted her for empire. She is said to have been a Jewess^h, though it is uncertain whether she was so by birth, or from having adopted the Jewish religion. Her preceptor in Grecian literature was Longinus the Platonist, whose treatise upon the Sublime is still extant, and who had certainly read some of the Jewish scriptures in Greek. Paul of Samosata has been accused of approaching rather to the notions of the Jews concerning Christ; and having also borrowed ideas from the Platonic philosophy, he may have made himself agreeable to Longinus as well as to Zenobia. Antioch, which might be called the eastern capital of the empire, would naturally fall into the hands of Odenatus, and after his death into those of his wife. She may therefore have been acquainted with Paul from the year 264, if not before; and when the sentence of deposition was pronounced against him, she hindered it in some measure from being carried into effect. The place of worship, in which the bishop officiated, ought to have been given up to Domnus; but Paul still kept possession of it, and there was no power to dislodge him. We are perhaps to conclude, that several of his former flock were willing to support him; and the heathen, who knew any thing of the matter, would take what would be called the liberal side; but there can be no doubt that this schism, which lasted for nearly three years, would retard the progress of the Gospel in Antioch.

When the council was ended, the bishops would

^h Athanas. *Epist. ad mon.* and the Ptolemies. Treb. Pol.
71. Philastr. c. 64. She traced her own pedigree to Cleopatra
lio. *Zenob.*

return to their respective cities; but the two Alexandrian presbyters, Anatolius and Eusebius, were detained in the East to be promoted to the highest stations. Theotecnus, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, fixed upon Anatolius to succeed him in his diocese. Some form of consecration by imposition of hands was used on such occasions; and for some time they both exercised the episcopal functions; which is the first instance on record of a bishop having a coadjutor. In the mean time Eusebius had been elected bishop of Laodicea in Syria, his merit pointing him out for that station, which happened to be vacant as he passed through the city; and when he died, he was succeeded by Anatolius, who was persuaded to leave Cæsarea, and supply the place of his friend.

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269.

It is uncertain whether Dionysius, bishop of Rome, lived to receive the letter of the council. He appears to have died at the end of the year in which the council was held, when he was succeeded by Felix. The letter having been addressed to the bishop of Alexandria as well as to the bishop of Rome, it was natural that they should communicate upon the subject; and the fragment of a letter has been preservedⁱ addressed by Felix to Maximus, which is probably to be placed about the year 270. The bishop of Rome appears to have sent his confession of faith to his brother of Alexandria, and nothing can be more explicit than his belief in the divinity of Christ, his eternal preexistence, and his

A. D.
270.

ⁱ Cyrill. Alex. *Apol.* vol. VI. p. 174. Concil. Ephes. act. I. p. 1403. ed. Lab. The genuineness of this fragment has

been called in question, but apparently without reason. See Constant. *Epist. Rom. Pontif.* p. 293.

A. D. 270. miraculous incarnation; all which points had been asserted, though at much greater length, by the council of Antioch; so that we are now able to say that the whole catholic church, the western as well as the eastern, agreed in denouncing Paul's opinions as novel, unscriptural, and heretical. Felix, bishop of Rome, appears to have been the author of several works.

In this same year 270, the emperor Claudius died, and his brother Quintillus, who attempted to succeed to his title, enjoyed it only seventeen days, when he was killed by the soldiers. Aurelian was then made emperor, whose activity, and perhaps we may say his virtues, made him more worthy of that office, and more equal to the burden of it, than those who had preceded him for several years. His reign of five years was almost incessantly occupied in repelling invasions of barbarians, or in recovering the empire of the East from the intrepid Zenobia. By withdrawing the Roman troops from Dacia, he tacitly allowed the Goths and Vandals to occupy that great province; and since the country on both banks of the Danube thus became more settled and less liable to hostile invasion, we may perhaps date from this period the introduction of Christianity into Wallachia. After successful campaigns in Italy,

A. D. 272. Pannonia, and Gaul in 271, Aurelian marched in the following year into the East. His progress was marked by one victory after another. Antioch surrendered to him; Zenobia was defeated in a pitched battle; her capital, Palmyra, was then besieged; and when it fell, the unhappy queen was taken prisoner, to swell the triumph of Aurelian at Rome. Longinus also was put to death by the conqueror;

but we are more concerned in considering an act of justice which he was called upon to perform at Antioch. It is a curious spectacle to see an heathen emperor, who was marching to overthrow a rival sovereign, appealed to by two parties of Christians who were disputing the possession of a church. I have stated that Paul, though excluded from communion by the orthodox party, was able, by the protection of Zenobia, to keep possession of the place of worship, in which he had been accustomed to officiate. The matter was referred to Aurelian when he was staying at Antioch. He would of course not think better of Paul's pretensions from his having been favoured by Zenobia; but he seems, in this instance, to have given an impartial judgment, or at least to have taken the fairest means for coming to a right decision. It was not likely that he should himself be able to say who was the rightful bishop of Antioch; and if he had referred to the neighbouring bishops, he would have consulted an interested party. He therefore looked to the conduct of those who were at a greater distance, and who had taken no part in the council. He decided that he should be the lawful bishop, with whom the Italian bishops, and particularly the bishop of Rome, held communion^k. The emperor was perhaps informed, that letters of communion, as they were called, were exchanged between bishops of different sees; and when the council wrote to the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, it was to inform them that these letters were in future to be sent to Domnus and not to Paul. If the letter of Felix, bishop of

A. D.
272.

^k Eus. *H. E.* VII. 30.

A. D. 272. Rome, to Maximus, bishop of Alexandria, was written before this time, we cannot doubt that Felix would have held no communion with the heretical ex-bishop of Antioch; and Aurelian's decision was therefore followed up at once by Domnus being put in possession of all his rights. The name of Paul does not occur again in ecclesiastical history, except when his doctrines were condemned by subsequent councils; but his followers, who were known by the name of Paulianists, continued as a sect till the beginning of the fifth century; and among other peculiarities of their creed, they appear not to have used the trinitarian form of words in the administration of baptism¹.

A. D. 274. Aurelian's military successes continued in the two following years; and in 274, the unfortunate Zenobia graced his triumphal procession at Rome. At the end of that year Felix, bishop of Rome, was succeeded by Eutychianus, and according to some accounts Felix was martyred. The fact may have been so, and Baronius mentions the names of several martyrs in different parts of the world; but it is more likely that they suffered at the beginning of the following year, when Aurelian would be celebrating his quinquennalia, or the fifth anniversary of his accession. It is certain, that this emperor was meditating a persecution of the Christians at the time of his death. He is represented as not only cruel and sanguinary^m, but also as superstitious; and, like his predecessor Elagabalus, he singled out the sun as a particular object of worship. His mother had been priestess of that

¹ Innocent. I. *Epist.* 22. See Council of Nice.
also the 19th canon of the ^m Vopiscus, *Aurel.* 36.

deityⁿ, and Aurelian had shewn himself extravagantly profuse in ornamenting his temples. This may have made him inclined to listen to the advice which was given him at the time of his death, to allow a persecution of the Christians. It had perhaps begun in Rome, and in the places where he was personally present; but his orders had not reached the distant provinces, when he died, and apparently by treachery, in the neighbourhood of Byzantium^o. This was in the March of 275, while he was making preparations for a war with Persia. The interregnum of six months which ensued was not likely to be favourable to the Christians; but Tacitus, who succeeded to the empire, revoked the edicts which had been issued against them by Aurelian. Tacitus lived only a few months after his accession; and his brother Florianus, who assumed the imperial title at Rome, did not long survive him. Probus, who had been declared emperor in the East, was more fortunate in retaining his title and his life: and there is reason to think that his reign was on the whole a season of peace to the Christians^p.

A. D.
274.A. D.
275.A. D.
276.

This is, however, generally fixed as the era of an

ⁿ Vopiscus, *Aurel.* 4. See c. 14, 25, 28, 31, 35, 39, 41. There is something like contempt for the Christians in the beginning of one of his letters to the senate: "Miror vos, patres sancti, tamdiu de apertendis Sibyllinis dubitasse libris, perinde quasi in Christianorum ecclesia, non in templo Deorum omnium, tractaretis." *Ib.* 20. He was

an admirer of Apollonius of Tyana. *Ib.* 24.

^o Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* 6. Eus. *H. E.* VII. 30. Orat. ad Sanct. c. 24.

^p He is said to have often dissuaded Aurelian from some act of cruel severity; which might perhaps lead us to think that he would not have wilfully persecuted the Christians. *Vopisc.* Prob. 8.

A. D.
276.

event, which must be described as extremely unfortunate to the cause of Christianity. The rise of Manicheism has been placed by most persons in the reign of Probus; but the writer, who has investigated this subject with most care^q, has calculated that the founder of this heresy died in 277, which was the second year of Probus. Manes, or Manichæus, was born about the year 240 in Persia. He was a man of great learning, and was probably brought up in Christianity; but he had also studied the religion of his countrymen, and endeavoured to form a new system by blending the two together. The Persians appear from a remote antiquity to have believed in the existence of two Principles, one good and the other evil. Some of them supposed each of these two Principles to be equally independent and eternal; while others supposed each of them to have proceeded from God or the first cause. Zoroaster had reformed the religion of Persia about the fifth century before Christ, and had established the unity of God on a firmer basis, by teaching that He was the author of the two Principles. Manes appears to have studied the Grecian philosophy, or rather that corrupt form of it, which had assumed the name of Gnosticism, and to have adopted from that quarter the notion of Matter being co-eternal with God. I have mentioned that some of the Gnostics may be thought to have borrowed the doctrine of two Principles from the Persians; but they loaded it with a series of successive emanations,

^q Beausobre, *Histoire critique de Manichéisme*. I have followed this writer in his details, and the references are given in note 13 to my

Bampton Lectures. Much light is also thrown upon the subject by Mosheim, *de Rebus ante Const. Sæc. III. §. 39, &c.*

whereas Manes inculcated the more simple belief, that God was the cause of good, and that Matter was the cause of evil. Before he had adopted these notions, he had been ordained a presbyter; and even after he had begun to teach them, he did not intend to abjure Christianity. He still believed that Christ the Son of God had appeared upon earth to defeat the malice of the evil Principle; but his theory concerning matter led him to adopt the Gnostic notion, that the body of Jesus was an incorporeal phantom^r. His notions concerning the second and third persons of the Trinity were certainly very different from those which true Christians entertain, and some of them might perhaps be traced to the ancient superstitions of his country. He is stated also to have spoken of himself as the Paraclete; and the statement is in some sense true; but we must not understand it to mean, that he identified himself with the Holy Ghost; he only professed to have received a divine commission in fulfilment of the promise made by Jesus Christ, that the Paraclete should communicate to the world a fuller and clearer revelation. The Old Testament was not received by him as a work of any authority; and though he recognised some portions of the New Testament, he thought himself at liberty to reject any passages which were opposed to his own hypotheses.

It is not to be supposed, that a maintainer of such notions would be allowed to preach them to

^r This may be seen in some fragments of epistles of Manes, published by Fabricius, *Biblioth. Gr.* vol. V. p. 284.

A. D. 276. his flock. He was accordingly expelled from the church, and found a favourable reception with Sapor, who mounted the throne of Persia in 241. That prince listened to Manes, so far as the doctrine of two Principles was concerned ; but when Manes proceeded to introduce his peculiar notions of Christianity into the religion of his country, he lost the favour of the king, and was obliged to retire from court. Upon the death of Sapor in 271 or 272, he again returned, and was well received by Hormisdas, the new monarch. This reign only lasted two years ; and though his son Varanes was inclined at first to favour Manes, he was compelled to give way to the calumnies and jealousies which existed against him ; and after a public conference, in which, as might have been supposed, Manes was defeated, he was put to death, either by crucifixion or by excoriation, in 277. Such, according to the most probable accounts, is the history of Manes ; to which is perhaps to be added, that he held a disputation with Archelaus, bishop of Caschar in Mesopotamia. The history of this conference, and of the arguments used on both sides, is still extant : but since the genuineness of it has been called in question, and since it cannot be proved that the dialogue is not fictitious, though it may still be a work of the third century, it is safest not to quote it for matters of authentic history. The wars with Persia, which began about 252, and lasted for a long period, may have been the means of introducing the Manichean tenets into the west : and it was perhaps after the death of Manes, at the beginning of the reign of Probus, that they became more generally spread.

Bardesanes had held opinions in some measure similar at the end of the second century^s: but he seems to have gained few followers, and to have been little known out of his own country. The name of Manes became much more widely spread. The doctrine of two Principles was held by many persons, who considered themselves sincere Christians; and Manicheism was heard of in Europe as well as in Asia down to a very late period. It is however essential to remember, that Manes divided his followers into two classes, the Elect, and the Hearers. The Elect were comparatively few, and were bound by rigid vows of abstinence and mortification. The Hearers, though certain injunctions were laid upon them, which were not required of ordinary Christians, did not differ in practice from the generality of mankind.

A. D.
276.

Probus had little else to do during the six years of his reign than to check the incursions of barbarians into various parts of the empire. We now meet with the Franks, Alemanni, and other tribes, who have left memorials of their name even to the present day. The emperor was successful in all his campaigns; but none of them furnish matter for ecclesiastical history. The Christians had perhaps suffered severely from some of the invaders, and would therefore have reason to be thankful for the victories of Probus. This was the case particularly in Gaul, where one writer^t mentions that the Germans had been the cause of suffering to the Christians; and Probus succeeded in recovering that country from their ravages in 277. The Christians

^s See Lecture XX. p. 182.

^t Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* I. 32.

A. D. 277. however were exposed to no trials which did not also molest the heathen; and though they may have been interested in the success of the emperor's wars, there was nothing which brought them personally in contact with him. There is an account of some martyrdoms having taken place at Antioch in the reign of Probus^u; but the time is uncertain, and incidents of that kind may have happened occasionally, without any instructions being given by the emperor. The see of Antioch was twice vacant in this reign, Timæus having succeeded Domnus in 276, and being himself succeeded by Cyril in 281.

A. D. 282. Probus was put to death by the soldiers in 282, while he was preparing for a war with Persia; and Carus, who succeeded him, gave the title of Cæsar to his two sons Carinus and Numerianus. The latter has acquired the name of a persecutor; and among many other Christians who suffered in this reign, Eutychianus, bishop of Rome, is mentioned,

A. D. 283. who appears to have died in 283. His successor was Caius, who is said by Baronius to have been nephew to the emperor Diocletian; but the authority for this relationship is extremely doubtful. It is also difficult to understand why Numerianus is named as the author of these cruelties. The army, which killed Probus and elected Carus, was stationed in Illyria; and Carus continued the expedition into Persia, taking with him his son Numerianus. There seems therefore little opportunity for the latter to have commenced a persecution of the Christians at Rome; and the campaign in the East was sufficient to occupy him and his father for two years. Carus

^u Baronius ad an. 281.

died at Ctesiphon in the summer of 284; upon which Numerianus left the army to return to Italy, but was put to death in Thrace in the September of the same year. He can therefore hardly have molested the Christians during the short time that he held the empire with his brother Carinus; and the latter had been employed against the barbarians in Gaul.

A. D.
284.

As soon as the death of Numerianus was known, the imperial title was given by the army to Diocletian, a native of Dalmatia, and of obscure birth, but who reigned for a longer period than any emperor since the days of Hadrian; and who furnishes more matter, though of a painful kind, for the ecclesiastical historian, than any of his predecessors. His first care was to give the title of Cæsar to Maximianus Hercules^x, which was almost equivalent to associating him with himself in the empire. Carinus still called himself emperor in the West; and Gaul, Spain, Italy, and other countries recognised his claim; but after more than one battle which were fought in 285, Carinus was killed, and no rival of any importance disputed the title of Diocletian. He seems from the first to have preferred Nicomedia in Bithynia as a place of residence, and it was here that in 286 he gave the title of Augustus to Maximianus, and admitted him as his colleague in the empire. Such a partition seems to have been necessary, when one commander was wanted to carry on the war with Persia, and another to check the barbarians who were inundating the west of Europe.

A. D.
285.

A. D.
286.

^x His name at full length was Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus Hercules.

A. D. 286. If the Christians suffered in the midst of these military movements, it was probably without the consent, or at least without any positive commands, of the emperors. Some martyrdoms are mentioned about this time in Lycia^y, and several in Rome^z; but the emperors were not present, and these are rather to be considered as insulated events, resulting from the cruelty or the caprice of some particular magistrate, or from a temporary ebullition of popular feeling. The martyrdom of the Theban legion in Switzerland would furnish a much stronger instance, if the accounts of it could be received as authentic. It may be said to have taken place about the year 286, when Hercules was on his march into Gaul; and one entire legion in his army is stated to have been composed of Christians. While they were encamped in a narrow defile, not far from the head of the lake of Geneva, and now called S. Maurice, from one of these soldiers, Hercules ordered this legion to be decimated for resistance to some orders which no Christian could comply with. The decimation was again repeated; and the remainder still continuing firm, he caused them all to be put to death. Such is the story of the Theban legion, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to receive in all its details, but which may have some foundation in fact; and the local tradition is certainly extremely ancient^a.

^y Baron. ad an. 285. Ruinart.

^z Baron. ad an. 286.

^a Such seems to be the conclusion of Mosheim, who names the principal writers upon the subject. *De Rebus ante Const. Sæc. III. §. 22.* Ruinart has

admitted the Acts of these martyrs as genuine, p. 274. It was about this same period that S. Alban is said to have been martyred in Britain. *Tillemont, Mémoires, tom. IV. p. 1097.*

If we may also receive the account of the martyrdoms which took place in Gaul after the arrival of Hercules, it is not improbable that Dionysius the bishop of Paris suffered about that time^b. Hercules continued in Gaul till about the year 291. There is good evidence^c, that during the latter part of this century, and before the beginning of Diocletian's persecution, the Gospel was not only making rapid progress, but the professors of it were enjoying ample toleration. Persons in high stations allowed not only their servants, but their wives and children, to profess themselves Christians. Places about the court, and even in the imperial household, were filled by Christians^d; and what is more remarkable, Christians were appointed to the government of provinces, with an express exception in their favour for not being obliged to assist at the usual sacrifices. Objections were no longer made to the Christians meeting in churches of their own; and these buildings began to assume an appearance of architectural splendour. It is perhaps worth recording, that one of the persons taken into the household of Diocletian was a presbyter of the church of Antioch, by name Dorotheus. He was well versed in profane as well as sacred literature, to which he added a knowledge of Hebrew; and the emperor was so pleased with him, that he gave

A. D.
286.

^b Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 995. tom. V. part. 1. p. 6.

^c Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 1.

^d A letter is extant of Theonas, bishop of Alexandria, to Lucianus, who was chamberlain to Diocletian, in which he gives

him rules for his own behaviour and for that of the other Christians about the court. It appears that the emperor's privy purse, his wardrobe, plate, china, and books, were partly in the care of Christians. Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* vol. III. p. 307.

A. D. him the honourable and probably lucrative post of
 286. presiding over the establishment for preparing purple die at Tyre^e.

Eusebius, whose early years were passed in viewing this pleasing prospect^f, has shewn himself to be an impartial witness, by stating as another proof of this outward peace, that the usual consequences of security were beginning to shew themselves. Pride, indolence, jealousies, and dissensions, were now to be found in Christian congregations: but though this was too frequently the case, there were also persons as much distinguished for learning and piety, as at any former period. Alexandria appears still to have been the centre of Christian learning. The see had been vacant in 282 by the death of Maximus, when Theonas succeeded: and during his time the catechetical school was taught by a presbyter named Achilles, whose knowledge of sacred and profane literature well qualified him for the station. Such at least is the statement of Eusebius^g, though other authorities^h would seem to place the school at this time under the charge of Serapion or Peter: and if we consider the state of Christian literature at Alexandria, it is highly probable, that there was more than one teacher at the same time. But the learning of the Christians appears still more striking, when we find an obscure city named Sebastopolisⁱ, in the distant country of Pon-

^e Eus. *H. E.* VII. 32.

^f He appears to have been born between the years 260 and 270. See *Danz de Eusebio Cæsariensi* p. 36. Stroth in the preface to his German translation of Eusebius says 268.

^g Eus. *H. E.* VII. 32.

^h Philip. Sidet. *apud Dodwell. Diss. ad Iren.* p. 488.

ⁱ This is the city named by Philostorg. *H. E.* i. 8. Eustathius says that he was bishop of Amasia, *It. Eutych.*

tus, having for its bishop a man, who is said by Eusebius to have been perfect in every branch of knowledge. His name was Meletius, in allusion to which and to his eloquence he was called the honey of Attica. He was as well versed in philosophy as in the scriptures; and all who knew him admired him as much for the simplicity of his life, as for the extent of his acquirements and the brilliancy of his talents. The persecution at the beginning of the following century will bring before us many other names, which were an ornament to the period, of which we are now treating.

Notwithstanding the activity of the two emperors, and the success of their arms against the Persians and Germans, new opponents rose up in different parts of the empire, and were able for some time to set them at defiance. Carausius, who had declared himself emperor in Britain in 286, became so formidable, that the two emperors met in consultation concerning him, and Maximianus found it necessary to build a fleet for carrying on the war. The first engagements were so much in favour of Carausius, that Maximianus found it advisable to make peace with him, and even to allow him the use of his imperial title: and in 290 a fresh competitor appeared in Egypt in the person of Achilleus. In the following year the two emperors met again at Milan, to consult about their affairs: and in 292 they strengthened their means of aggression by calling in the aid of two other persons with the title of Cæsar. These were Constantius Chlorus and Galerius Valerius Maximianus; of whom, Constantius took the command in Gaul, having first divorced his wife Helena, and married Theodora the stepdaughter of Hercu-

A. D.
286.

A. D.
290.

A. D.
292.

A. D. 292. leus. At the same time he sent his son Constantine, who was now sixteen years old, to attend upon Diocletian at Nicomedia; and though he was treated in a manner suited to his rank, and had the advantage of gaining military experience, the young prince was in fact kept as a hostage for the good conduct of his father. Constantius is said to have been great nephew of the emperor Claudius^k who died in 270: and his wife Helena is also said to have been daughter of a British prince; but the latter story has been proved to be unfounded, and was probably invented to cover the obscurity of her birth. Galerius at the same time married Valeria the daughter of Diocletian, and took the command in Illyria. Hercules had Africa and Italy, while Diocletian protected the eastern part of the empire, including Egypt, residing principally at Nicomedia.

In this partition of the empire the government of Britain fell to Constantius, but he was occupied in Gaul for some years, and in the mean time Carausius was killed by Allectus, who himself assumed the title of emperor. In 296 Allectus was defeated and killed, and Constantius then passed over into the island. About the same time Diocletian succeeded in recovering Egypt. He marched in person into that country, killed Achilleus, and took Alexandria after an eight months' siege^l. It was now probably that he wrote a letter to Julianus the proconsul of Africa

^k Claudius, Quintillus, and Crispus were brothers: Crispus had a daughter Claudia, who was wife of Eutropius and mother of Constantius. *Treh. Pollio. Claud.* 13.

^l It is probable, that Constantine attended Diocletian in this expedition. *Eus. de Vit. Const.* I. 19. See Danz, de *Eus. Cæsar.* p. 53.

against the Manichees^m. It is dated from Alexandria, and shews that Manicheism had made great progress in Egypt. Among other reasons which prejudiced Diocletian against it, was its Persian origin. He had felt the difficulty of subduing the Persians by arms, and he was now afraid that they were going to overrun the world with a new and dangerous doctrine. The proconsul had written to the emperor upon the subject, and it is not improbable that he confounded the Christians with the Manichees. There are passages in the emperor's letter, which might well have caused alarm to the Christians. He speaks very strongly of the old religion being supplanted by a new one, and of the criminality of suffering established usages to go into decay. He accordingly ordered, that persons professing Manicheism should suffer capitally, that their books should be burnt, and their property confiscated: but if any of them happened to be high in rank or station, their property should be seized, and themselves sent to work in the mines. The mind, which could dictate such a letter as this, was not far removed from conceiving hostility to the Christians.

A. D.
296.

It must have been about the same time, that a new heresy appeared in Egypt, which was founded by a man named Hieracas or Hieraxⁿ. He professed himself a Christian; but his Egyptian education had led him to study astrology and magic, to which he added an acquaintance with the literature and philosophy of Greece. The Manichæan doctrines,

^m See Baron. ad an. 287. Mosheim disbelieves many of the statements of Epiphanius. *Jurisprud. vet. ante-Justiniana*, p. 707. *De Rebus ante Const. Sæc. III.*

ⁿ See Epiphan. *Hær.* LXVII. §. ult.

A D. which were now becoming popular, soon attracted
 296. his notice. He prohibited marriage and the use of animal food; in which he followed the more rigorous of the Manichees; though there is reason to think that Manes did not impose this abstinence upon all his followers^o. Hierax appears to have borrowed largely from the Gnostics: and with respect to the nature of the Son of God, he had a notion peculiarly his own, which tended to a denial of the eternal existence of the Son^p. His followers were called after him Hieracitæ; and they were likely to be numerous, when we find Manicheism so widely spread as to attract the notice of the government; and when we remember that many persons in Egypt had from a long period been following an ascetic or monastic life. It does not however follow, that Hierax adopted the doctrinal as well as the practical principles of the Manichees.

If the Christians were confounded with the Hieracitæ or with the Manichees, there was likely at this time to be a revival of the ancient prejudices against them. The frequent wars, in which the emperors and Cæsars were now engaged, may also have led to many jealousies and offences, when the Christian soldiers refused to be present at the sacrifices. From these or other causes a storm began to gather, which soon burst upon the heads of the unhappy Christians. Galerius appears to have been the first mover of the scheme for their annoyance^q. He was of a savage, unfeeling disposition; and his ambition had

^o Beausobre, vol. II. p. 470. p. 729.
 762. 765.

^q Eus. II. E. VIII. ult. p. 405. Lactant. de Mort. Pers. 881. Athanas. de Synod. 16.

been gratified by a victorious campaign against Narseus king of Persia, in 297. Diocletian, who had been afraid of facing the danger, had sent him upon this expedition, and he now felt alarm at the success of his son-in-law. His fears led him to consent to measures of severity against the Christians. He had been endeavouring to pry into futurity by some of those superstitious observances which attended heathen sacrifices; and the priests, who had probably concerted their plans beforehand, declared that no answer could be obtained from the gods, while profane persons were present^r. By these they intended the Christians, who perhaps attended officially, and who of course declined taking any part in these impieties. Diocletian was now brought to that state of feeling, to which Galerius had for some time been urging him. It was agreed between them, that all persons holding office about court or in the army, should be obliged to be present at the sacrifices. An order to this effect was sent to the governors of provinces in 298, and many Christians resigned their rank in consequence, and retired into private life. Galerius would probably have enforced the order by more sanguinary measures; but Diocletian did not as yet consent to this, and a Christian soldier was to make his option between throwing up his commission or abjuring his faith. The year in which this tyrannical edict was issued, was the fifteenth anniversary of Diocletian's accession: and the celebration of this occurrence may have given occasion for many insults to be offered to the Christians. The cases in which they were put to death were very few, and the letter of the edict did not authorize

A. D.
297.

A. D.
289.

^r Lactant. *l. c. c.* 10.

A. D. such cruelty : but magistrates may have executed
298. it with more or less severity according to their own feelings ; and there is some evidence of martyrdoms have taken place in Africa. This country was under the government of Herculeus, who had been gaining victories in Mauritania, at the same time that Galerius was pursuing his conquests in the East. Herculeus had the vices of Diocletian, such as his love of money, and his sensuality, but with a more active and enterprising mind : and Galerius was likely to find him a willing assistant in his schemes against the Christians.

Constantius was the only one of the four heads of the empire, who did not take part in this cruelty. Being engaged in the distant provinces of Gaul and Britain, he was probably not consulted when the edict was issued ; and the names only of Diocletian and Herculeus would be affixed to it. Constantius however did not execute it in the countries under his command ; and with some few exceptions, with which he was not personally concerned, the Christians of those parts were as much unmolested as before. The case appears to have been otherwise at Rome, which with the rest of Italy was under the government of Herculeus. Caius, the bishop of that see, died in 296, and so escaped the painful scenes which were witnessed by his successor Marcellinus. These began in 298, when the edict was issued against the Christian soldiers : but there is evidence that another species of injustice was used against them, of which we may see the monuments in our own day. When Herculeus was at Carthage, he had some baths constructed upon a magnificent scale, which were called after his own name : and when he

came to Rome shortly afterwards, he built some others equally splendid, which bore the name of Diocletian. The ruins of these enormous baths are still to be seen at Rome; and the interest which they excite is increased, when we read that they were raised by the labour of Christian soldiers, who were condemned to these and other public works by Her-
culeus^s.

A. D.
298.

Matters continued in this state from 298 to 303, which must have been an anxious period for the Christians, when some of them were actually suffering, and they were in constant expectation of worse calamities befalling them.

In the winter of 302 Diocletian and Galerius met at Nicomedia, and while their private conferences were supposed to relate to the affairs of the empire, they were engaged in preparing plans for the persecution of the Christians^t. Galerius was still the prime mover. His mother Romula who was superstitiously devoted to paganism, was fond of having sacrifices to accompany her public entertainments. The Christians in consequence declined her invitations, and her pride being now touched as well as her religion, she was incessant in urging her son to put down their enemies by force. Galerius had also his share of superstition, and used every argument to his father-in-law, that the former edict might be followed up by severer measures. Diocletian was naturally timid, and being now old and infirm he had no wish to take the lives of his subjects^u: but

A. D.
302.

^s The evidence of this fact is taken from the Acts of Martyrs, which are often deserving of no credit, but there seems to be some foundation for the story. See Baron. ad an. 298. N^o. X.

^t Lactant. *l. c. c.* 11.

^u A work has been written by Gudmundson, (*Vindiciæ Dio-*

A. D. 302. Galerius would not be dissuaded. A few friends, principally military, were taken into consultation, who advised that the national religion should be supported. The answer of an oracle, as might be expected, was given in the same strain; and Diocletian at length reluctantly consented, that some additional measures should be taken. Galerius did not dissemble his opinion, that all persons who refused to sacrifice should be burnt alive; but the emperor was not yet prepared for this barbarity, and the first proclamation which was issued, did not affect the lives of the Christians.

eletiani, Hauniae, 1793,) in which Diocletian, but I cannot consider it successful.

LECTURE XXIX.

THE first edict issued by Diocletian against the Christians appeared early in the year 303^a. It ordered that their churches should be pulled down and their books burnt^b; and if any persons refused to give up their books, they were liable to be punished capitally. The time would allow this edict to be conveyed to several places before Easter. Theodoret^c speaks of all the churches being destroyed on Good Friday, which was perhaps the case in that part of Syria, with which he was acquainted. At Nicomedia, where the decree was first issued, and where Diocletian and Galerius were still staying, an earlier day was fixed for its execution. The feast called Terminalia took place on the 23d of February; and early on the morning of that day an officer with a company of soldiers went to the church. It stood on a high spot of ground, and was visible from the palace. Galerius rather wished it to be burnt, but the emperor was afraid of the flames spreading to the adjoining houses; and after they had set fire to some copies of the Scrip-

A. D.
303.

^a The accuracy of this date is proved by Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 302. Walchius, *Diss. de Christ. sub Dioclet. Persecut.* §. XVI. tom. V. part 1. p. 309.
^b Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 2.
^c *H. E.* V. 39. p. 242. *The- rapent.* IX.
p. 51. Tillemont, *Mémoires*,

A. D. 303. tures, and plundered the building of its furniture, the soldiers completely demolished it in a few hours.

This was intended as a signal for further aggressions. On the following day another edict was issued, which ordered that all Christians who held any public station should be removed; that inferior persons should be subject to torture and imprisonment, and that no Christian should be allowed to be plaintiff in any cause^d. It appears also, that the meetings of Christians were strictly prohibited, and the houses in which they were held were liable to be seized for the use of the state^e. The first person who suffered was a man of rank, who tore down the edict as soon as it was posted up; and as a punishment for this outrage upon the laws, he was burnt to death^f. An accident soon furnished a pretext for farther cruelties. Part of the palace at Nicomedia happened to take fire, and Galerius persuaded the emperor that the Christians had burnt it. A contemporary writer^g has accused Galerius of being himself the incendiary; but Eusebius appears not to have heard of this^h; and Constantine, who was afterwards emperor, and who was now at Nicomedia, says expressly that the palace was struck with lightningⁱ. Several Christians and others of the emperor's household were put to the torture, or burnt, upon suspicion of this crime; and another fire having taken place shortly after, Diocletian no longer wanted excitement to continue the persecution. The members of his own family were the

^d Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 2. Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* c. 13.

^e Eus. *H. E.* IX. 10. p. 457.

^f Eus. VIII. 5. Lactant. c. 13.

^g Lactant. c. 14.

^h Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 6. p. 382

ⁱ Orat. ad Sanct. c. 25.

A. D.
303.

first to suffer. His wife Prisca, and (which is still more extraordinary) her daughter Valeria, the wife of Galerius, had embraced Christianity; and the emperor compelled them both to join in a sacrifice^k. The edict was still in force, which had been published five years before, ordering all official persons to attend the sacrifices. It was now interpreted to mean, that they who did not comply should be put to death; and an example was set in the torturing of several persons, who not only held places in the household, but had been great favourites with the emperor. One of these, named Peter, was literally broiled to death. Dorotheus and Gorgonius, after many sufferings, were hanged^l; and though the emperor was present at the deaths of many of his servants, he extorted from them no confessions as to the late fires, but only gave them an opportunity of proving the constancy of their faith.

While the government was thus declaring open war against the Christians, other opponents were attacking them with the pen. Two works were published at this time at Nicomedia, which were intended to ridicule Christianity^m. One was written by a philosopher, who pretended great zeal for paganism, and a wish to save the Christians from suffering; but he took care to introduce many compliments to the emperors for defending the old religion. Lactantius, who was living in Nicomedia at the time, speaks of this man as extremely dissolute in his life, and of his book as being very defective

^k Lactant. c. 15.

^l Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 6. Valerius *ad l.* This Dorotheus is probably the same who was

mentioned at p. 415, though some think that the latter survived to the reign of Julian.

^m Lactant. *Instit.* V. 2.

A. D.
303.

in argument. The other work was composed in two books, and called *Philalethes*. The author was Hierocles, who held some judicial station in the city, and had been one of the persons consulted about the persecution. He appears afterwards to have had a military command in Egypt, and we shall find him distinguishing himself for cruelty against the Christians. His work was addressed to them in the form of an expostulation; but it was a bitter attack upon the founders of their religion, as well as upon the Scriptures, with which he shewed such an intimate acquaintance, that he might almost have been suspected of having once been a believer. Lactantius, who was a native of Africa, was now teaching rhetoric at Nicomedia, which gave him an opportunity of reading these works, as well as of witnessing the sufferings of the Christians; but since the place afforded him few pupils who cultivated the Latin languageⁿ, he took to writing; and some few of his voluminous works have come down to us. The *Divine Institutions*, in seven books, though not published till after this period, were undertaken as an answer to the two works mentioned above, and they contain much valuable information, as well as decisive proof of the writer being a sincere believer in the Gospel; but the reader will frequently have to recollect, that Lactantius was a layman and a rhetorician, who was but imperfectly acquainted with some leading points in Christianity.

A political event, which happened at this time, appears to have exasperated the emperor, and to have excited him to still farther cruelties. Two

ⁿ Lactant. *Instit.* V. 4.

persons, in different places, assumed the imperial title; one in Armenia, who has not had his name preserved; the other was Eugenius, who commanded some regiments at Seleucia, and being invested with the purple by the soldiers, he took possession of the neighbouring city of Antioch. The inhabitants soon put him and his supporters to death, and his authority lasted only a few days; but Diocletian chose to be very angry with the two cities of Antioch and Seleucia; and it was after this disturbance that he issued a still more definite edict against the Christians. It was ordered that the heads of the churches in every place should first be put into prison; and then that every means should be used to compel them to sacrifice^o. At the same time, or perhaps earlier, letters were sent to Hercules and Constantius, calling upon them to take similar measures in the countries under their command^p. The edict was executed at Nicomedia, as soon as it was published; and one of the first persons who suffered was Anthimus, bishop of that city^q. He was beheaded, and great numbers of his clergy shared the same fate. Some were burnt to death, others were drowned; and Eusebius speaks of the prisons being so full of these unhappy victims, that there was no room for ordinary criminals.

Eusebius was himself a spectator of these atrocities in his own city of Cæsarea in Palestine. That province was then under the government of Fla-

A. D.
303.

^o Eus. VIII. 2. p. 379. 6. p. 383.

^p Lactant. c. 15.

^q Eus. VIII. 6, 13. There is some reason for thinking that

he suffered in 312. See Vale-
sius ad Eus. VIII. 13. IX. 6.
Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. V.
part. 1. page 321. part. 3.
p. 150.

A. D.
303.

vianus, and the first edict arrived there a little before Easter. The clergy of the neighbouring churches were brought there to be tortured, and the barbarous works was carried on to a frightful extent; but the deaths in this first year were very few. There were some whose courage failed them, and who consented to sacrifice; but many had their lives spared, because when they were senseless from pain, or when their hands were powerless from the rack, they were made to go through some act of sacrificing, which satisfied the magistrates^r. For the present these cruelties were confined principally to the clergy; and there was perhaps no place, particularly in the East, where some persons were not found who rejoiced at the license which was given them to vex the Christians. The edicts would not be long in reaching Hercules and Constantius, and the former was too willing to execute them in the countries under his command. He happened now to be in Italy; and there are accounts of some presbyters and deacons being put to death in Rome. We cannot however depend upon these details; and though reports were spread in the following century, that Marcellinus the bishop had been seen to offer incense in a temple, there is good reason to think that the whole was a calumny^s. He is said by one ancient writer^t to have acquired great glory by his conduct during the persecution. The Christians, who lived in the countries subject to Con-

^r Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 1.

^s See Baron. ad an. 302. N^o. LXXXVIII. and Pagi, N^o. XVIII. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. V. part 1. p. 347.

The Acts of the Council of Si-nuessa, in which Marcellinus is said to have been condemned, are spurious.

^t Theodoret. *H. E.* I. 3.

stantius, were more fortunate. It seems uncertain whether he even allowed any of the churches to be pulled down^u; but if he was obliged to consent to this, he protected the Christians themselves from any molestation. The character of this prince (if it has not been too favourably drawn by Christian writers) affords an agreeable relief to that of his colleagues in command. It does not appear that he actually professed himself a believer in the Gospel, though his mind could not have been far removed from this conviction. His son's biographer speaks of him as convinced of the impiety of polytheism; and the friends with whom he took care to surround himself were Christians^x. We may hope therefore that there was at least much less suffering in Gaul than in other parts of the empire; and the remark is probably to be extended also to Britain; but there is some reason to think, that Spain was at this time under the government of Hercules, and that the Christians of that country were exposed to great suffering soon after the issuing of the edicts^y. We cannot however depend upon the details which have come down to us of these martyrdoms^z.

Before the end of the year Diocletian and his son-in-law left Nicomedia, previous to which they appear to have issued a still more general edict, which ordered that all persons whatever, not merely the clergy, should be compelled to sacrifice^a. The

A. D.
303.

^u Lactantius says that he did, c. 15. Eusebius denies it, *H. E.* VIII. 13. p. 396. *de vit. Const.* I. 13.

^x Eus. *l. c. c.* 16, 17.

^z See Walchius *de Christ. sub Dioclet. in Hispan. Persecut.* §. 52.

^z See Baronius ad an. 303. N^o. CXLI. Ferreras, *Hist. Hispan.* vol. I. p. 303. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. V. part.

1. p. 93.

^a Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 3.

- A. D. twentieth anniversary of Diocletian's accession was
 303. to be celebrated this year in December. Galerius kept
 it at Antioch, to which city he probably went on
 account of the late insurrection. Being now left to
 himself, he would be sure to execute his own orders
 with the greatest severity; and nothing could be
 more brutal than the way in which he treated Ro-
 manus, a deacon and exorcist of the church of Cæ-
 sarea, who happened to be at Antioch. Being sen-
 tenced to be burnt, and to have his tongue cut out,
 he anticipated the latter punishment with his own
 hand; after which he was tortured for a long time
 in prison, and then strangled^b. The bishop of An-
 tioch at this period was Tyrannus, who had suc-
 ceeded Cyril in 299; but we do not read of any
 personal suffering which he underwent. At the
 same time Diocletian was celebrating his Vicennalia
 at Rome; and the usual splendour of such occasions
 was increased by his having a triumph, together
 with Hercules, for victories gained in Persia and
 Africa. The presence of the two emperors, and this
 succession of public shows, were likely to be pro-
 ductive of evil to the Christians; but there was
 something in Diocletian's reception at Rome, which
 extremely displeased him. If these festivities had
 been given with a view to conciliate his subjects in
 the capital, they totally failed; and he was so dis-
 gusted with them, that he set out in the depth of
 winter for Ravenna, though his bad health made
 the journey particularly unpleasant. In the summer
 of 304 he found himself once more in his favourite
 residence of Nicomedia; but with his constitution
 entirely broken, and in a state of great danger^c.

^b Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 2.^c Lactant. c. 17.

Herculeus probably continued at Rome, or at least in Italy, where he passed the whole of the year 304. In the month of October, Marcellinus, bishop of Rome, died, and some accounts say that he was martyred. There is also reason to believe, that the see continued vacant for more than three years, which might seem to point out a season of more than usual danger. This however was not the case, as we shall see presently, with the whole of the three years; and some other cause must have operated, beside persecution which delayed the election of the bishop. The names of other martyrs are mentioned, who suffered at Rome^d; but I should conclude upon the whole, that the Christians in that city were exposed to much less suffering than in other parts of the empire.

Egypt was likely to be one of the first countries in which the Christians were tormented, and we know that this was the case for several years^e. The see of Alexandria was now filled by Peter, who had before been teacher in the catechetical school^f, and succeeded Theonas in the bishopric in the year 300, three years before the persecution began^g. He had been a sufferer with Dionysius fifty years before in the Decian persecution; and his great age, as we shall presently see, did not preserve him from still severer trials. The whole of Africa being under the government of Herculeus, the edicts were executed with the same severity in that country as in Egypt. Anulinus was the proconsul, and the

A. D.
304.

^d Baron. ad an. 304. num. XXIV.

^e Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 9. p. 386.

^f Philip. Sidet. *apud Dodwell, Diss. ad Iren.* p. 488.

^g Eus. *H. E.* VII. ult. p. 373.

A. D. names of several bishops and their clergy are
 304. mentioned, whom he put to death^h. Particular pains seem to have been taken in Africa to force the Christians to give up their booksⁱ. Mensurius, who had been raised to the see of Carthage after Lucianus, the successor of Cyprian, was accused of having delivered up the books belonging to his church: but he proved satisfactorily, that he had deceived the inquisitors by giving them some heretical works. At the same time he expressed his disapprobation of those persons, who voluntarily presented themselves or their books to the magistrates, before any inquiry had been made^k.

This second year of the persecution was a period of continued trials to the Christians of Asia, particularly in Syria and Palestine. Urbanus was governor of the latter country, and Eusebius mentions some martyrdoms which took place at Cæsarea and at Gaza^l. Agapius had now succeeded Theotecnus as bishop of Cæsarea^m, but no account has been preserved of his personal sufferings. It was probably at the beginning of the persecution that Stephen, bishop of Laodicea in Syria, shewed himself deficient in courage, and complied with the order of the governmentⁿ. He was successor to the celebrated Anatolius in that see; and when he proved himself unworthy of filling it, his place was supplied by Theodotus, who, in addition

^h See Baronius ad an. 302. num. CXXIV.

ⁱ See Gesta apud Zenophilum, *Routh. Rel. Sacr.* vol. iv. p. 102, &c.

^k Augustin. in *Brevic. collat.* diei III. c. 13.

^l De Mart. Pal. c. 3.

^m Eus. *H. E.* VII. 32. p. 371. He seems certainly not to be either of the martyrs mentioned in *de Mart. Pal.* c. 3.

ⁿ *Ib.* p. 371.

to his other learning, was a physician of great celebrity. A. D.
305.

The following year, 305, brought a great change in the government of the empire. Diocletian, as I have already stated, had returned to Nicomedia in the summer of 304. His health, which had been for some time declining, became so much worse at the end of the year, that a report was spread of his death. He however recovered, though subject to fits of insanity; and, on the first of May, 305, he complied with the pressing solicitations of Galerius, and abdicated the empire^o. Galerius had previously persuaded Hercules to do the same; and while one emperor abdicated at Nicomedia, his colleague went through the same form at Milan. Constantius and Galerius now changed their title of Cæsar for that of emperor: and though Constantius was named first, as being the oldest, he was no party to these political changes, and Galerius took upon himself to select two persons, who should have the title of Cæsar. His choice fell upon Severus, who had some military experience, but was loose and intemperate in his life; and upon a son of his sister, to whom he had lately given the name of Maximinus, but whose education had been spent in rustic employments, without any experience in war or politics. The empire was now divided in a more formal manner than it had been before; and while Italy, Africa, Spain, and Gaul, fell to the share of Constantius, Galerius retained Illyria, Greece, Egypt, and all the East.

Constantius was now able to act as he pleased

^o Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* c. 18, 19.

A. D.
305.

with regard to the edicts for persecution. The countries under his government had perhaps not altogether escaped during the two first years^p, but tranquillity was now restored: and the Christians of Africa, who had suffered severely under Hercules, felt the advantage of being subject to Constantius. It was in this year, and after the cessation of the persecution, that a council met at Cirta in Numidia^q. The object was to elect a bishop of that city in the room of Paul: and Secundus, bishop of Tigisis, presided. The church having been destroyed, the parties met in a private house, and, instead of proceeding to their business, they began to accuse each other. It had been discovered that several bishops, during the late troubles, had complied with the imperial edict, and delivered up their copies of the Scriptures, or other property of the church. From this circumstance they were called *traditores*; and when the persecution had subsided, they were looked upon with great contempt by the confessors. The council of Cirta appears to have been composed principally of *traditores*; and Silvanus, whom they elected bishop of Cirta, had the same charge proved against him afterwards^r. Even the president himself was accused of being guilty; and the conduct of himself and the other bishops led to results, which, for a long time, were productive of serious evil to the African church. Secundus was also in communication with Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, upon a subject which always led to much

^p See the Acts of Rogatianus and Donatianus, who suffered martyrdom at Nantes, *apud Ruinart*. p. 280.

^q See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 303.

^r See Gesta *apud Zenophilum*, *Routh. Rel. Sacr.* vol. IV. p. 100.

discussion after a persecution. This was the case of the martyrs. It had long been a custom, that the names of these persons should be recorded, and their memories honoured by an annual celebration in the church to which they belonged. But when in course of time the number of the martyrs became very great, it was found necessary to use some selection as to the names which were to be preserved. There is some evidence that the lists were submitted by the bishop of the diocese to the bishop of the province for his approval. Thus Secundus, who seems to have been primate of Numidia, wrote to Mensurius, the bishop of Carthage, who told him that those persons ought not to be placed on the list of martyrs who had courted death voluntarily, or those who surrendered their books before any inquiry was made. It appears from the same correspondence, that some persons had been anxious to be put into prison, either for sake of the support which they received there from the charity of Christians, or that the credit which they gained as confessors might cause their former irregularities to be forgotten*. This being the case, it was very necessary that the lists of martyrs should be submitted to some examination.

A. D.
305.

At the same time the question was revived, which had been agitated so warmly in the time of Cyprian, concerning the treatment which was to be shewn to the lapsed. At that period the whole Christian world, with the exception of the Novatians, had agreed to act upon the same general principles: but no definite rules had been laid down

* Augustin. *in Brevic. Collat. diei III. c. 13.*

A. D. 306. for particular cases. Before the Easter of 306, Peter, bishop of Alexandria, undertook to do this for his own diocese. The fourteen canons which he drew up are still extant; and it is pleasing to see this venerable prelate, who had shewn such fortitude himself, and had been a sufferer in more than one persecution, yet acting with lenity and indulgence towards those who had been less courageous. The cases of the lapsed admitted of many variations. Some had given way immediately, without offering any resistance; others had resisted at first, and been thrown into prison, but their courage failed them afterwards. Some had consented to sacrifice at first, but they afterwards repented, and submitted to suffer torture; and in all these cases a particular period of penitence was specified, after which the parties might be admitted to communion. The case was also considered of persons who had escaped by deceiving the magistrates, by submitting their slaves to torture instead of themselves, by paying money, or by concealing themselves; and indulgence was extended to all of them upon certain conditions. Those who had had incense put into their hands, or some meat from a sacrifice forced into their mouths, when their bodily sufferings had made them insensible, were at once admitted to communion: but if any of the clergy had lapsed, though they might be pardoned like the rest, they could only be admitted to communion as laymen, and could never again exercise their clerical functions. The bishop of Alexandria appears to have been less displeased than the bishop of Carthage with those who voluntarily courted persecution: and his proceedings, on this occasion, are a proof, that though the churches

of any one province were anxious for uniformity, they were quite at liberty to make rules for themselves, without consulting the bishops of any other province. This is farther evident by what the bishop of Alexandria states of it being customary in his church to keep a fast on the Wednesday and Friday before Easter, and always to make the Sunday a festival.

A. D.
306.

It was perhaps rather earlier than this, and before the persecution had entirely subsided, that a council was held upon the same subject at Illiberis in Spain. It was attended by nineteen bishops, many of whom had been confessors; and among the rest by Hosius, bishop of Corduba, who seems to have suffered during some persecution about the year 296^t. The canons of this council were drawn up in a tone of much greater severity than the regulations made by the bishop of Alexandria. The latter had not excluded any case of lapse from readmission into the church after a certain period: but the Spanish bishops decided that some persons should never be admitted to communion, not even at their deaths. They were also more severe towards those who had purchased their safety by payment of money. It is plain from all their regulations, that their great object was to prevent idolatry, to which perhaps they had seen some lurking attachment in their recent converts. With this view they prohibited the use of wax candles in the cemeteries, because they were used at heathen festivals; and paintings in churches were likewise forbidden. This council is also remarkable for ordering bishops, presbyters,

^t See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 305. num. V. The acts of this council are extant.

A. D. deacons, and subdeacons, if they happened to be
306. married, to live separate from their wives.

While the Christians in the west were thus recovering from their troubles, and had time to attend to these arrangements of their affairs, their brethren in the east found themselves exposed to still more implacable enemies. Galerius knew well what he was doing, when he gave the title of Cæsar to Maximinus; and the latter soon exercised his new power in enforcing the imperial edicts. There is scarcely a country in Asia, in which Eusebius does not speak of some inhuman acts of cruelty being performed. Such scenes were becoming less frequent at the time of Diocletian's abdication: but, before the end of the year 305, they were revived by Maximinus with more than their former horrors. The government of Syria and Egypt having been committed to him by Galerius, he sent an order to Cæsarea in Palestine, and probably to other places, which arrived before the Easter of 306, that the magistrates should make all the inhabitants in a body attend a public sacrifice. When the ceremony had begun, and while Urbanus, the governor of the province, was making a libation, he had his arm suddenly arrested by a young man, who rebuked him for his idolatry. His name was Apphianus; and he had left his heathen parents, who were persons of rank in Lycia, and came to Cæsarea, where he met with Eusebius. His rash act of heroism on the day of the sacrifice cost him his life. His body, after being torn and mangled till life was extinct, was thrown into the sea: and it was naturally looked upon as an extraordinary circumstance, that a violent storm washed it back again, and laid it

before the gates of the city^u. In Mesopotamia, Arabia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Pontus, the same scenes of cruelty were exhibited: and we must conclude them to have been great in the latter country, when Meletius, the celebrated bishop of Sebastopolis^x, was obliged to fly, and conceal himself in Palestine for seven years^y. In other places the Christians left their homes in large numbers, and took refuge with the neighbouring barbarians, who allowed them the free exercise of their religion, and perhaps received by these means a knowledge of Christianity^z. It was about this time that the grandfather of Basil fled into the forests of Pontus, where he lay concealed for seven years^a.

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It was probably about the same period that Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who had lately published his canons concerning the lapsed, was obliged to seek for safety by flight. The refinement of cruelty, which was practised upon Christians of both sexes in the diocese of Alexandria, would exceed our belief, if it had not been related by one of the bishops who was himself a sufferer, as well as by Eusebius, who happened to be upon the spot. The number of victims varied from ten to an hundred in a day; and the heads of the churches were particular objects of attack. Faustus, a presbyter of Alexandria, who was old enough to have been a companion of Dionysius in the Decian persecution, was beheaded^b. The bishop, who wrote an account of these cruelties, was Phileas, who was not only known as a man of

^u Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 4.

^x See page 417.

^y Eus. *H. E.* VII. 32. p. 372.

^z Eus. *de vit. Const.* II. 53.

^a Greg. Naz. *Orat.* XLIII. 6.

p. 774.

^b Eus. *H. E.* VII. 11. p. 339.

VIII. 13. p. 394.

A. D. 306. learning, but had filled civil offices in the city of Thmuis, of which he was now bishop. Being thrown into prison, he wrote to the Christians of his diocese, exhorting them to behave with courage, and relating the martyrdoms which had already happened^c. One of his companions in prison was Philoromus, who had filled a judicial station of some dignity at Alexandria, where he decided causes, attended by a guard of soldiers. The fate of these two persons excited great interest. Numbers of their relations and friends, and even the judge who was to pass their sentence, entreated them to comply with the imperial edict. Their wives and children were urged as an argument to make them yield, but all to no purpose: they continued firm to their faith, and both of them were beheaded^d. Three other bishops who suffered, were Hesychius, Pachymius, and Theodorus; the first of whom was a man of considerable note, if he was the Hesychius who published an edition of the Septuagint. Origen's great work had now been before the world for more than half a century, and it contained the fullest materials for settling the Greek text. The copies however still continued very different, and Hesychius undertook a revision of it, which obtained general circulation in the diocese of Alexandria^e. If he was the bishop who suffered martyrdom, his edition of the Septuagint probably appeared at the end of the third century.

The separation of these pastors from their flocks

^c Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 10.

^d *Ib.* 9. Their acts are preserved, and considered genuine by Ruinart. See Tillemont,

Mémoires, tom. V. part. 3. p. 411.

^e Hieron. *Adv. Rufin.* II. 27. p. 522.

was a serious evil, independent of their personal sufferings; and unhappily it furnished occasion for a schism, which continued for a long time in the Alexandrian church. Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis, taking advantage of the absence of Peter and the other bishops, took upon himself to make regulations which no person but the bishops of the dioceses had authority to do. Provision had been made for the spiritual wants of the Christians; but Meletius was determined to interfere, and even went so far as to ordain some persons for the ministry. An account of these proceedings soon reached the bishops who were imprisoned at Alexandria; and the four whom I have mentioned, Hesychius, Pachymius, Theodorus, and Phileas, addressed a joint epistle to Meletius, expostulating with him upon the irregularity of his conduct. The letter is still extant^f, and we learn from it, that it was contrary to all custom for one bishop to ordain in the diocese of another: and it also shews that these bishops looked up to Peter, as exercising over them a kind of metropolitan authority^g. Meletius paid no attention to this remonstrance; but when the authors of it had closed their career by martyrdom, he went to Alexandria, and continued there the same irregular proceedings^h. Two persons supported him in his ambitious views: one of them was Isidorus, the

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^f It was first published by Maffei, *Osservazioni Letterarie*, vol. II. p. 11—18. and by Routh, *Rel. Sacr.* vol. III. p. 381.

^g Epiphanius mentions Egypt and the Thebaid, Marcotis, Libya, Ammonia, Marœotis, and

Pentapolis, being under the bishop (or, as he was then called, the archbishop) of Alexandria. *Har.* LXVIII. 1.

^h See the anonymous author quoted by Maffei and Routh, *ll. cc.*

A. D. 306. other Ariusⁱ, who afterwards became so celebrated for his heretical tenets: and by the assistance of these men, Meletius was able to draw after him some of the presbyters, who were left by Peter in charge of the Alexandrian church. Being now at the head of a party, he visited the confessors, who were in prison or in the mines, and two of them received ordination from his hands^k. When Peter heard of this open infringement of his rights, he wrote from his place of concealment to his flock at Alexandria, telling them not to hold communion with Meletius, but to wait till he could return and investigate the affair. The time of his revisiting Alexandria is uncertain: but since the persecution was continued in Egypt, and with still greater fury, for the four or five following years, it is most probable that he did not quit his concealment till after the death of Galerius in 311. There is evidence that Meletius himself was a sufferer in these scenes of cruelty. He was accused of having purchased his safety by consenting to sacrifice: but he probably lay for some time in prison before he took this step; and for the present his schismatical conduct was checked, though he found ample opportunity to resume it afterwards.

While Galerius was thus gratifying his utmost wishes by tormenting the Christians in his own division of the empire, he was obliged to submit to

ⁱ This is confirmed by Sozomen. *H. E.* I. 15.

^k This also is confirmed by Sozom. I. 24. A very different origin of the Meletian schism is given by Epiphanius, *Hær.*

LXVIII. but it is much safer to follow Athanasius, Socrates, and Sozomen. Pagi places the origin of the heresy in 301; *ad Baron. an. 306. n. XXIX.*

a bitter mortification in another quarter. Constantius, who was now in Britain, had for some time felt his health declining, and had sent for his son Constantine to come to him from Nicomedia. Galerius had kept him there, as Diocletian had done before him; and though he was advanced to posts of dignity and command, he was an object of no small jealousy and fear to the emperor. Galerius did not intend to send him to his father: but Constantine contrived to escape, and arrived in time to be present at his father's death, which took place at York in the July of the year 306¹. The young prince was now in his thirty-second year, and was immediately saluted as emperor by the soldiers: but he was contented with the title of Cæsar, which Galerius conferred upon him as soon as he heard of the death of Constantius. At the same time Severus was declared emperor, and his services were shortly required in another part of the empire. Galerius had so provoked the inhabitants of Rome by a new plan of taxation, that in the October of this year they set up a rival against him. This was Maxentius, the son of Hercules, and son-in-law of Galerius, who, to strengthen himself in his new dignity, sent to his father, who was living in Campania, and urged him to resume the empire which he had reluctantly abdicated. Hercules readily complied; and Maxentius thought to ingratiate himself with his subjects, by shewing kindness to the Christians, and ordering all persons to abstain from molesting them^m. This seems at least to prove that the Christians were very nu-

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¹ Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* I. 20.
c. 24. Eus. *de vit. Const.* ^m Eus. *II. E. VIII.* 14.

A. D. merous at Rome; but we shall see in the sequel
306. that they found this kindness of Maxentius to be
only assumed to serve a purpose.

Galerius now thought seriously of checking this formidable opponent, and the new emperor Severus was ordered to march into Italy. It is probable however that he did not set out till the beginning of the following year. In the mean time Maximinus was not pleased with this preference being given to Severus; and he contrived to escape observation, while he was secretly making overtures to Maxentius at Romeⁿ. The two tyrants were in some respects very similar in their characters, and particularly in their being addicted to magic and all kinds of prophetic superstition. This was likely to make them prejudiced against the Christians: and while Galerius had his attention engaged by the political movements in the west, Maximinus found a more congenial employment in carrying on the persecution. In the December of 306 we find him at Cæsarea in Palestine^o, where his presence was honoured with a show of games of unusual magnificence. Many and strange animals were exhibited in the amphitheatre; and among other amusements, a Christian named Agapius, who had been tortured two years before, was exposed as food to a bear; but being not quite killed, he was sent back to prison, where he lingered for a day, and was then thrown into the sea. Maximinus had probably many exhibitions of this kind in the places which he visited; and his conduct is a striking instance of the mixture of cruelty with superstition.

ⁿ Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 14. p. 398.

^o *Ib. de Mart. Pal.* c. 6.

If he was the ignorant barbarian, that Lactantius describes him to have been, he must have had persons about him who made him their instrument; and it could hardly have been a real regard for religion, which urged him to restore the temples and all the other appendages of heathen worship, which had now fallen into decay^p.

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In the mean time Severus had marched against Maxentius, and in the spring of 307 approached with his army to the walls of Rome. Here his soldiers deserted him, and being obliged to fly, he threw himself into Ravenna; but being pursued by Hercules, he surrendered himself to him, and was put to death. News was now brought to Rome that Galerius was coming in person to avenge the death of Severus; and Hercules went into Gaul to engage the assistance of Constantine. The marriage of the latter to Fausta, the daughter of Hercules, was celebrated about May^q; but in the mean time Galerius had marched to Rome, impatient to punish the inhabitants as well as Maxentius. When he was before the city, his soldiers behaved to him as they had done before to Severus; and while he was retreating as rapidly as he could to Illyria, Hercules returned from Gaul, and shared the government of Rome with Maxentius. The father and son soon found that they could not agree: and Hercules, perceiving that his son was the favourite with the army, took the resolution of visiting Galerius in Illyria. Diocletian had also gone thither; and while they were all three to-

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^p Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 14. ried to Minervina, and had one son, Crispus.

^q He had before been mar-

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gether, Galerius made Licinius emperor in the room of Severus. The future history of Hercules, who died at Marseilles by his own hand in 310, not being connected with that of the church, need not employ any more of our attention.

Maximinus was now more than ever enraged at being again past over, and at hearing of the title of emperor being given to Licinius. Accordingly, without waiting for the consent of Galerius, he took the same title to himself before the end of the year 307. About the same time another emperor appeared in Africa. Maxentius wished to extend his authority into that country; but meeting with opposition at Carthage, and from Alexander, who commanded the prætorian guards, he laid a plan for destroying him. Alexander having discovered it, assumed the purple himself, and was able to retain his dignity for more than three years. One of his first acts was to persecute the Christians, and they continued more or less in a state of suffering during the whole of that time. We also learn from the events of this period, that the Egyptian church was not partaking of the peace which was enjoyed by the subjects of Constantine. Egypt was considered to belong to the eastern division of the empire, and was therefore subject to Maximinus. That monster appears to have been again in Palestine during part of this year: and when he was absent, his orders were executed to the utmost of his wishes by Urbanus, who was still governor of the province. The work of torture was kept up during the whole of the year at Cæsarea; and among those who suffered, none was more distinguished than Pamphilus, the intimate friend of Eusebius, and a pres-

byter of the church in that city. He was a man of great learning, as well as of good family, being a native of Berytus in Phœnicia; and had studied at Alexandria under Pierius. From hence he removed to Cæsarea, where he took orders, and collected a valuable library; and he is said to have written out nearly all the works of Origen with his own hand^r. It is probable that he was also the founder of a school in this city. His friend Eusebius, who was a native of Palestine, resided at Cæsarea during the greater part of the present persecution, and was ordained presbyter by Agapius. He was thus an eyewitness of the sufferings which he has related, and exhorted the martyrs and confessors to stand firm. His regard for Pamphilus seems to have approached to veneration, as was testified by the life which he wrote of him in three books, and by his always bearing the name of Eusebius Pamphili. When Pamphilus was thrown into prison at the end of the present year, Eusebius was his constant companion^s: and during the two years that this imprisonment lasted, the two friends composed together a defence of Origen, in five books, to which Eusebius afterwards added a sixth. It appears therefore that the controversy concerning the soundness of Origen's opinions had begun before this time; and we know that Methodius, bishop of Tyre, who was a man of great learning, and author of several works, was one of the earliest writers who attacked the charac-

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^r Hieron. *Catal. Script.* The library continued to the time of Jerom. Eusebius gave a catalogue of it in his life of Pamphilus.

^s I have not seen a work called *Eusebius Captivus*, published by H. Marius at Basle in 1538.

A. D. 307. ter of Origen^t. Methodius appears to have suffered martyrdom during some period of the present persecution^u.

Pamphilus had been put to excruciating tortures before he was imprisoned, and several persons of both sexes were treated in the same way. Great numbers were sent to work in the copper mines at Phæno^x, a place to the south of the Dead Sea in Arabia Petràea, where the operation was said to be particularly unwholesome^y. It was to these unhappy persons that Eusebius and Pamphilus dedicated their defence of Origen^z. Urbanus, who had been the chief conductor of all these cruelties, fell at length under the displeasure of his master, and was succeeded in his government by Firmilianus, at the beginning of the year 308. It was probably at the same time that Maximinus, who happened then to be again at Cæsarea, ordered Urbanus to be beheaded. Firmilianus was his successor in ferocity as well as in authority: and in addition to the victims from his own province, he had consigned to him from Egypt several Christians, who were to work in the mines at Phæno. Eusebius speaks of ninety-seven being sent at one time from the Thebaid^a: and there is some evidence, that Maximinus himself was now at Alexandria, and ordered their punishment. The martyrologies speak of a governor of Egypt named Mennas, who was a Christian; and

^t Hieron. in *Ruf.* I. 11. p. 466. The work was upon the subject of the Resurrection. *Catal. Script.* v. Methodius. See Leo Allat. *de Method.*

^u Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

^x Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 7.

^y Athanas. *Hist. Arian.* 60. p. 380.

^z Photius, cod. 118. The first book of this Defence is extant in a Latin translation made by Rufinus in 397.

^a *De Mart. Pal.* c. 8.

Hermogenes, who was sent to supersede him, is said to have been also converted^b. Maximinus then went in person to Alexandria, and had both these persons tortured to death; but though there is reason to think that Maximinus was at Alexandria during this persecution^c, the story of the two Christian governors is not to be received implicitly. There is however no doubt that it was this emperor, who ordered the persons that were sent to the mines, to have their right eyes forced out, and their left feet dislocated^d. These and similar mutilations became henceforth a favourite punishment; and in addition to the pain and lasting inconvenience which they caused, they were intended also as a mark of disgrace; since persons who were thus disfigured were considered to be incapable of the rights of citizens^e. Another tradition, which is perhaps not authentic, concerns a governor of the Thebaid, named Arianus, who is said to have been a Christian, and to have suffered for his religion^f. The zeal which was displayed at this trying time by Antony the monk, may be received with more certainty. The life of this extraordinary man has been written by Athanasius, who may be called his

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^b See Baronius ad an. 307. num. XXXIV.

^c See Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 14. p. 400.

^d Compare Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 8. p. 420. Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* c. 36. The effects of this cruelty were witnessed many years after. Paphnutius, an Egyptian bishop, attended the council of Nice, who had been maimed in this way. Rufin. *H. E.* I.

4, 17. Paul, bishop of Neocæsarea, was also at the council of Nice. Theodoret, *H. E.* I. 7. Maximus, bishop of Jerusalem, is also mentioned, *ib.* II. 26. Rufin. *H. E.* I. 17. Also Potamo, bishop of Heraclea. Epiphani. *Har.* LXVIII. 7.

^e Suidas, v. *Diocletian*.

^f Baronius ad an. 310. num. XXIV.

A. D. 303. contemporary though much younger in age: and though the account contains some marvellous anecdotes which may excite our suspicions, the outline of his history must at least be true. Antony was one of those persons who were at this time living by themselves, or in small fraternities, in the deserts of Egypt: and when he saw the Christians going in crowds to Alexandria to be tortured, he followed them thither, that he might encourage and comfort them under their sufferings. He visited them constantly in the prisons or in the mines, and was not afraid of personally encountering the magistrates. He seemed indeed to be courting martyrdom: but though he continued a long time in Alexandria, his wish was not gratified, and he lived to return again to his solitary life.

While the Christians in Egypt and Palestine, and probably throughout Asia, were groaning under the tyranny of Maximinus, their brethren in Europe were still exempt from suffering. In Gaul and Britain, where Constantine was personally present, tranquillity was perfectly restored^g: and though Maxentius had usurped the imperial authority in Italy, he found it politic, as I have already observed, not to molest the Christians. The see of Rome, which had continued vacant since the October of 304, was filled up in the February of 308, by the election of Marcellus. Such at least is the most probable calculation^h, though others suppose Marcellus to have succeeded Marcellinus in the same year. If we may receive the epitaph as genu-

^g Lactant. *Instit.* l. 1. de 306. num. XXV. Tillemont, *Mort. Pers.* c. 24. *Mémoires*, tom. V. part. 1. p.

^h See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 372.

ine, which is said to have been written upon Marcellus by Damasus, one of his successors, this bishop was particularly strict in requiring the lapsed to submit to a course of penitence. His measures are said to have given rise, not only to discontent and complaints, but even to tumults and bloodshed; which might confirm the notion of the Christians being at this time unmolested by their enemies; and thus unhappily they were able to give vent to their feelings of hostility to each other. So true it is that a season of peace, however short, has often been a cause of misery and scandal to the church. Maxentius conducted himself so tyrannically to all his subjects, that the heathen were occupied in looking to themselves, without seeking to persecute the Christiansⁱ; and this was perhaps the chief security which the latter enjoyed during the usurpation of Maxentius. The same effect may have operated to a certain extent in the East, except where Maximinus was personally present: and Eusebius speaks of the heathen being actually disgusted with the cruelties practised upon the Christians^k. From some cause or other there was a slight cessation of these barbarities in the summer of 308: but before winter, Maximinus revived them again in all their severity. The governors of provinces and the magistrates had perhaps been remiss: and orders were now sent to them in every place to rebuild the temples which were in decay, and to insist upon men, women, and children, being present at the sacrifices, and tasting the meat which had been

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ⁱ Sophronia, who was wife to the prefect of the city, and a Christian, stabbed herself to escape the violence of Maxentius. Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 14.

^k De Mart. Pal. c. 9.

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offered to some idol. By a refinement of cruelty it was also ordered, that whatever was offered for sale in the market, should first have been made to touch a portion of the sacrifice; and the managers of the public baths were to let no persons wash themselves clean from these pollutions.

In the month of November these orders were acted upon in Cæsarea of Palestine, and Firmilianus had again the gratification of torturing and killing several Christians. He now struck out a new source of annoyance, and the bodies of the martyrs were thrown outside of the city, with guards put to watch them and prevent their burial. The birds and beasts were soon attracted by the prey, and the ground was covered with the flesh and bones of these mangled carcasses. Portions of them were even brought occasionally within the walls: and Eusebius, who witnessed the horrid spectacle, could not fail to notice, what must have struck every person in the city, that on a fine clear day, when apparently there was no cause for such a phenomenon, all the buildings were covered with a thick dew, which ran down them like water. The climate of Palestine may perhaps account for such an appearance: but we cannot wonder that the Christians looked upon it as an interposition from Heaven, when the very stones shed tears at their inhuman sufferings.

At the same time the persecution was carried on as hotly as ever in Egypt. One hundred and thirty Christians had their eyes and feet treated in the way which I have described; after which the whole company was sent to work in the mines, part of them to Palestine, and part to Cilicia. The com-

passion of these suffering Christians appears in a striking point of view, when we read of some persons going from Egypt in the depth of winter to visit their brethren in Cilicia¹. All of them however did not accomplish their journey. Some were stopped at the gates of Cæsarea, and had their eyes put out and their feet dislocated. Three were stopped in a similar way at Ascalon, where they were burnt or beheaded. Another party, which had accompanied the unhappy convicts to Cilicia, was returning home, and five of them were stopped at the gates of Cæsarea in the February of 309. Having confessed themselves to be Christians, they were put into the prison, where Pamphilus and his companions had now been lying for nearly two years. On the next day Firmilianus had all the prisoners brought before him, and after torturing the five Egyptians, he ordered them to be beheaded. A similar sentence was then passed upon Pamphilus^m, and twelve of his companions; and their bodies were exposed for four days by order of the governor, that the birds and beasts might eat them. Eusebius asserts that they remained perfectly untouched, and were afterwards buried with all due solemnity.

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It seems to have required all the activity of Maximinus, and his insatiable love of cruelty, to have his orders executed by the provincial magistrates. In spite of all his vigilance, the humanity of these men sometimes prevailed over their fear of offending the tyrant, and the Christians felt their chains be-

¹ De Mart. Pal. c. 8, 10.

^m The life of Pamphilus, written in three books by Eusebius, is lost; but a fragment,

supposed to be taken from it, is published by Fabricius, in the second volume of his edition of Hippolytus, p. 217.

A. D. coming lighter upon them. This was the case
309. toward the end of the year 309, which was the seventh year of the persecution; and may partly have been owing to the illness of Galerius, who about this time began to be afflicted with intense bodily suffering. The Christians, who were condemned to work in the mines of Palestine, had begun to enjoy a little more liberty, and the houses in which some of them lived were used as churches". The governor of the province, having observed this alteration in their condition, wrote to Maximinus concerning it; and an order was accordingly sent to the overseer of the mines, that these indulgences should be stopped. The plan adopted for annoying the Christians was to disperse them in different places. Some were sent to Cyprus, some to mount Libanus, others to various parts of Palestine, where they were all kept to hard labour. This however was not sufficient severity. Four victims were selected, who were perhaps of most note among the number, and sent to the military commander of the district. Two of them, Peleus and Nilus, were Egyptian bishops; the other two were presbyters; and when they refused to abjure their faith, they were ordered to be burnt. There were others, who from their age or bodily infirmities had been unable to work in the mines, and had been allowed to live in a place by themselves. One of these was Silvanus, the venerable bishop of Gaza, who had been sent to the mines, three years before, having first had his foot dislocated. Another named John had come with the prisoners from Egypt; and though he was already blind, the same cruelty had

ⁿ Eus. *de Mart. Pal.* c. 13.

been inflicted upon his eyes as upon the rest. His blindness did not hinder him from knowing the Scriptures by heart. The whole number of these persons was thirty-nine; and since they could not bear the removal, and they were of no use as labourers, Maximinus ordered them all to be beheaded in one day. A. D.
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These martyrdoms happened early in the year 310: and it was probably about the same period that Eusebius witnessed similar cruelties at Tyre. He was not unlikely to leave Cæsarea, when his friend Pamphilus was martyred; and since he was then engaged in finishing the defence of Origen, he might be able to get some information at Tyre, where the last years of Origen's life were past; and where Methodius, the earliest and most formidable assailant of Origen's character, had lately held the episcopal see. While Eusebius was at Tyre, he saw several Christians exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre: and he could hardly be mistaken, when he states expressly that he saw these animals refuse to touch them, though every expedient was used to excite their fury^o. Tyrannion bishop of Tyre, and Zenobius a presbyter of Sidon, who was also a physician, were martyred in the course of this persecution; but they were taken from their own cities and suffered at Antioch^p: and at the time of Eusebius visiting the city, Paulinus was bishop of Tyre, with whom he formed an intimate friendship, and dedicated to him his great work of ecclesiastical history. Eusebius appears also to have been in Egypt, where he witnessed some of the sufferings which he has described^q: and it is most probable that this journey was undertaken after the

^o Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 7. ^p *Ib.* 13. ^q *Ib.* c. 9. p. 386.

A. D. 310. death of Pamphilus. A charge was brought against him some years later, that he had consented to join in a sacrifice, that he might obtain release from prison: but there are good grounds for thinking that the whole was a calumny; and nothing certain is known of his personal sufferings during the persecution^r. It was about this time, that he wrote a book against Hierocles, whom I have mentioned as the author of an attack upon Christianity at the time of the edicts being first issued at Nicomedia. Hierocles had endeavoured to shew that Apollonius of Tyana had worked more miracles than Jesus Christ, and Eusebius refuted such a notion in the short work which is still extant.

Another author, who wrote in defence of Christianity at this time, was Arnobius, a native of Sicca in Africa, and a rhetorician by profession. Having been bred up in heathenism, he had been in the habit of decrying Christianity; and when he was afterwards convinced of its truth, he found a difficulty in being admitted to baptism. He accordingly wrote a work in seven books against the heathen, which is still extant^s. It is a masterly exposure of the follies of paganism, as well as a refutation of the calumnies against the Gospel: but being written in haste by a man who was lately converted, it may be expected to contain some inaccuracies; and Arnobius would be no authority on points of doctrine, except as shewing the popular belief in his own day. If the date of this work is rightly fixed to the year 310^t, the author, when he speaks of the persecution,

^r He appears to have been in prison. Epiphanius, *Har.* LXVIII. 7.

^s Hieron. *Chron.* ad an. 329.
^t See Pagi *ad Baron.* an. 302. num. XIV.

may perhaps have alluded to what was done by the
usurper Alexander, as well as to the earlier decrees
of Diocletian and Maximinus: but since Lactantius
was a pupil of Arnobius, and was himself a teacher
of rhetoric at Nicomedia at the beginning of the per-
secution, Arnobius must have been advanced in years
at the time of his conversion. It is possible how-
ever that his work against the Heathen was written
earlier^u.

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310.

^u See Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. IV. p. 1374.

LECTURE XXX.

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IN the beginning of 310 Marcellus, bishop of Rome, was succeeded by Eusebius : but the latter held the see only a few months, and was succeeded by Melchiades. It seems probable that the Roman Christians were exposed to no particular sufferings during that period. Maxentius could have felt no partiality towards them, except from political motives : but he had promised them a freedom from vexation at the beginning of his usurpation ; and he does not appear to have behaved more tyrannically to them than he did to all his subjects. If Marcellus was banished from Rome by his orders, the evidence of which is by no means certain^a, it cannot be proved that this act formed a part of any general persecution. An apostate from Christianity is said to have excited the displeasure of the tyrant against the bishop : and he may perhaps have invented some accusation which was not connected with questions of religion. Maxentius had also promised to give back to the Christians their places of worship, which had been taken from them at the beginning of the usurpation : but though he had written a letter to this effect, and his commander of the prætorian guards had done the same, the busi-

^a Epitaph. Damasi in Marcellum, *apud Gruter.* p. 1172.

ness was no forwarder when Melchiades was elected, than it had been four years before. This bishop sent these letters by some of his deacons to the prefect of the city, and claimed a fulfilment of the promise^b: but we are not informed whether his application succeeded. Melchiades was accused afterwards of having sent this message by a deacon, who had delivered up some property of the church during the late persecution, but he denied the charge^c.

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Maxentius caused some relief to the Christians in another quarter in the year 311, by sending an officer into Africa, who defeated and killed Alexander. The persecution had been revived in that country since 307; and though it perhaps did not extend far, the immediate neighbourhood of the usurper was likely to be a place of danger to the Christians. There is evidence that Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, was exposed to considerable suffering. A deacon named Felix had written a letter against the usurper, and being afraid of the consequences, had taken refuge with Mensurius. The bishop having refused to give him up, was examined before a magistrate, who acquitted him, and allowed him to return to Carthage, but he died before he reached the city^d, and Cæcilianus was elected in his room. There was a party in the church of Carthage which had opposed Mensurius, and charged him with belonging to the *traditores*: but it appeared afterwards to be a calumny; and at the time of his examination he had made a list of several valuable articles belonging to his church, which he left to be given to his

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^b Augustin. *Brevic. Collat.*
diei III. c. 17. p. 574.

^c Ib. l. c.

^d Optat. *cont. Parmen.* l. 17.

A. D. 311. successor. The persecution in that country did not in fact entirely cease till the end of the following year, when Maxentius sent an order into Africa, that the Christians should not be molested. There were however much more effectual steps taken to relieve the Christians in the eastern part of the empire. They had now had little or no intermission of their sufferings for eight years, since the issuing of the first edict by Diocletian and Galerius in 303. Galerius, as I have stated, was taken extremely ill at the end of the year 309. His pains continued to increase through the whole of the following year; and in the spring of 311 his disorder had become so loathsome and intolerable, that his death was evidently approaching. His conscience then began to smite him for his cruelty to the Christians: his physician, who was perhaps a Christian, is said^e to have announced to him, that his disease, which was incurable, was a visitation from God: and on the thirtieth of April an edict was issued at Nicomedia in the name of himself, Constantine, and Licinius, by which the Christians were allowed to have buildings for the exercise of their worship. They were also enjoined to offer up their prayers for the emperors and the empire; and the magistrates were to receive letters of instructions as to their conduct in this affair^f.

The name of Maximinus was not prefixed to this edict. He was generally resident in Syria, and the critical state of Galerius did not perhaps allow time for his being consulted; beside which, Galerius

^e Rufin. *H. E.* VIII. 18.

c. 34, and in Greek by Eusebius, *H. E.* VIII. 17.

^f The edict is given in Latin by Lactantius, *de Mort. Pers.*

would well know his disinclination to favour the Christians. Licinius was present with the dying emperor, and there was no need to ask Constantine for permission to use his name. Copies of the decree, and directions in accordance with it, were immediately sent to the different governments of Asia Minor; and Galerius did not survive the issuing of the decree by many days. As soon as the news reached Maximinus, his jealousy of Licinius overpowered every other feeling: even his hatred to the Christians was for a time forgotten; and he hastened into Bithynia, to secure to himself the countries which had been governed by Galerius. Licinius was also at the head of an army, and there was every prospect of a civil war: but the two emperors came to terms without a battle; and Maximinus retained Asia Minor and Bithynia, while Illyria and Thrace were allotted to Licinius. Maximinus now began to consider how he could best evade the late edict, without openly flying in the face of his colleagues. He accordingly did not publish the edict itself in his own dominions, but gave verbal orders to the persons in authority, that the persecution was to cease. Sabinus, his prime minister, wrote letters to the governors of provinces, which seemed to give complete toleration to the Christians: but such was not the tyrant's real intention. These officers however acted upon the letter of their instructions, and released the Christians from the prisons and the mines. In a moment all was joy and wonder and thanksgiving, where before there had been suffering and sorrow. Places of worship were immediately opened in the towns, and attended by crowds. The roads were filled with persons re-
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A. D. 311. turning to their homes; and even the heathen were led to think that God alone could have worked so sudden and so blessed a change^g. It was probably at this period that Peter quitted his concealment, where he had hid himself for some years, and returned to Alexandria. He lost no time in inquiring into the conduct of Meletius; and a synod of bishops was convened to try him for his irregular proceedings, as well as for the heavier charge of having sacrificed in the late persecution^h. A sentence of deposition was passed against Meletius: but so far from complying with it, or taking any steps to justify himself, he carried to still greater length his schismatical principles, and treated the bishop of Alexandria with personal insolence. From this time the Meletian schism was regularly organized, and Peter would have the mortification to find his authority rejected by some of his clergy. Arius however did not at present join the seceders. He ceased to give his support to Meletius: and the character of Peter appears in a favourable light, when we find that he not only forgave Arius, but ordained him deaconⁱ. The reconciliation however did not last long. The bishop found himself obliged to issue a sentence of excommunication against all the Meletians, and he took the decided measure of not recognising their baptisms. We are hardly competent to determine whether he was justified in the latter step: but it was likely to revive ancient dissensions; and among other persons who expressed their dissatisfaction, Arius again distinguished him-

^g Eus. *H. E.* IX. I.

^h Athanas. *Apol. cont. Arian.*

59. p. 177. Socrat. *H. E.* I. 6.

ⁱ Sozomen. *H. E.* I. 15.

self. Peter perhaps felt that he had gone far enough in attempting to conciliate: and Arius, who had so lately been admitted to officiate in the church, was now excluded from its communion. He continued in this state for some time: but the persecution, as we shall see, shortly revived; and the bishop, if he had acted hastily, was called to answer for his conduct at a higher tribunal.

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Maximinus had resolved upon very different measures from those which he had been compelled to adopt. In November he was again at Nicomedia, where he celebrated his quinquennalia, or the fifth anniversary of his taking the imperial title. The occasion was favourable for renewing hostilities against the Christians. One of the plans was to circulate calumnies concerning them. The old stories were revived of their religious meetings being full of indecency. A work was forged, called the Acts of Pilate, which gave a false and disgraceful account of the life of Jesus; and pains were taken, that children at school should learn their lessons from such books as these^k. New regulations were made concerning the heathen priests: and not only were they established in every city and town, but each province had its own high priest, who was taken from the persons of highest rank, was ordered to appear dressed in white, and was attended in public by a guard of soldiers^l. The imitation of the Christians was evident in all this: and the priests were not only ordered to perform sacrifices daily, but they were to prevent the Christians from build-

^k Eus. *H. E.* I. 9. IX. 5.

^l Ib. VIII. 14. p. 399. IX. 4. Lactant. *de Mort. Pers.* c. 36.

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^m Eus. *H. E.* IX. 2. 7. 9. Lactant. c. 36.

ⁿ Lactant. c. 37.

There were occasions when blood was shed in his presence with less reserve. Lucianus, a presbyter of Antioch, was sent to Nicomedia to be punished at the end of 311, or the beginning of 312. I have mentioned that Antioch was one of the cities which petitioned to have the Christians removed. Theoctenus, who held a place of importance in that city, was an active agent in executing the designs of Maximinus^o. Great numbers were put to death by his means, and he was rewarded by being promoted to the government of the province^p. Among his other victims was the presbyter Lucianus, but he was reserved to receive his punishment in the emperor's own presence at Nicomedia. He was a man of great learning, and his name had for some time been celebrated through the East. He was author of some treatises upon Faith, and of some epistles^q; but his great work was an edition of the Septuagint. I have mentioned that Hesychius, an Egyptian bishop, had lately produced a similar work, which became the standard edition in the diocese of Alexandria. Another had been prepared by the joint labour of Eusebius and Pamphilus, which met with general reception in Palestine; and Lucianus published a third, which was used in all the countries between Antioch and Byzantium^r. He had observed the great corruption which had crept into the copies; and some zealous supporters of heathenism had lately been tampering with the text^s. This fact, if it can be admitted as certain, might be of value in accounting for some of the extraordinary

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^o Eus. *H. E.* IX. 2. 3.

^p *Ib.* II. p. 460.

^q Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

^r *Ib.* *Apol. adv. Rufin.* II. 27. p. 522. *Præf. in Paralip.*

^s *Acta Luciani.* Suidas.

A. D. 311. variations, which still appear in the copies of the Septuagint; and will explain why such pains were taken at the beginning of the third century, in three different parts of the world, to restore the integrity of the text. Lucianus was particularly qualified for such a work, by having an accurate knowledge of the Hebrew^t; and in the time of Jerom, some copies of the Scriptures still went by the name of Lucianus^u. The very copy, which he had written out with his own hand, was said to have been found at Nicomedia after his death^x; but this statement may reasonably be doubted.

Notwithstanding the celebrity of Lucianus, and the essential service rendered by him to biblical literature, there is good reason to believe that he at one time adopted the sentiments of Paul of Samosata. The fact is asserted by Alexander^y, bishop of Alexandria, who wrote only six years after the death of Lucianus; and though several persons^z have attempted to clear Lucianus from the charge, it is difficult to believe that the bishop of Alexandria was mistaken^a. Paul of Samosata was deposed from his bishopric of Antioch in 269, about forty-three years before the death of Lucianus; and since the latter was also a native of Samosata, and a presbyter of Antioch, he may have been personally acquainted with Paul. It is most probable that he received his ordination from him; for Alexander states, that Lucianus kept

^t Acta Luciani. Suidas.

^u Hieron. *Catal. Script.*

^x Pseudo-Athanas. *Synops.*

7. p. 204.

^y Apud Theodoret. *H. E.* 1.

4. p. 15.

^z Baronius *ad an.* 311. N^o. XI.

an. 318. N^o. LXXV. Schel-
strat. *Diss.* III. *de Concil. An-*
tiach. c. 2. Bull. *Def. Fid. Nic.*
II. 13. 8.

^a See Pagi *ad Baron.* *an.* 311.
N^o. XI. Petavius *de Trin.* I. 4.
13. Huetius, *Origenian.* II. 3. 6.

himself from communion with the church during the time that Paul's three successors held the bishopric. He seems to have done this because Paul had been put out of communion; and we know that there was a party of some importance which sided with Paul. The three successors of this heretical bishop were Domnus, Timæus, and Cyril; the last of whom died in 299; and it is implied in Alexander's statement, that Lucianus returned to communion with the church after that period. This seems to be the true state of the case; and I cannot but conclude, that he once took the same view of Christ's divinity with his countryman Paul. This may account for the Arians claiming him as one of their party; and some of his followers, who were called from him Conlucianistæ, were certainly addicted to Arianism. There was even a division of the Arians, who were called Lucianistæ^b; but though Lucianus may have agreed in some points with Paul of Samosata, there is no evidence of his having held the same sentiments which were propagated a few years later by Arius. If he agreed with him at all, it was perhaps in his opinion concerning the human soul of Jesus Christ: for we are told by one writer^c that Lucianus did not believe that our Saviour assumed a human soul; and though Arius owed his celebrity to his tenets concerning the divinity of Christ, it is well known that he also maintained the other opinion which is ascribed to Lucianus. This notion about the soul of Christ, though utterly untenable, and derived perhaps from the Samosatenian

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^b See Epiphani. *Har.* XLIII. torg. II. 14. p. 484.
^c Epiphani. *Ancor.* 33. p. 38.
 1. p. 378. Alexand. *l. c.* Mar. Victor. *adv. Arian.* I. Philos-

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heresy, would rather lead us to think that Lucianus was firmly convinced of our Lord's divinity; and if the creed, which was put forward as a composition of his by the Arian bishops assembled at Antioch in 341, was really written by Lucianus^d, we must either say that his tenets regarding the Trinity were perfectly sound, or that the difference between the Arians and their opponents was imperceptible.

It should be remembered also to the credit of Lucianus, that he rejoined the church at the very time when the aspect of affairs was most threatening. From thence to the time of his death he was always more or less in personal danger; and after concealing himself for some time, he was at length betrayed by a presbyter named Pancratius, who had embraced the Sabellian tenets^e. This may be taken as a proof that he had abjured his former errors. The resemblance between Paul of Samosata and the Sabellians was very apparent, and his betrayer was perhaps incensed against him for having deserted what he considered their common creed. Lucianus was too valuable a prize to be consigned to the prisons of Antioch. He was reserved for the special gratification of Maximinus at his own city of Nicomedia; and on his way through Cappadocia, he prevailed upon forty soldiers, who had recently abjured their faith, to repent of the sin, and to prove their sincerity by facing their persecutors. When he was at Nicomedia, he delivered a defence of his religion in the presence of the emperor himself

^d This fact is mentioned only by Sozomen. *H. E.* III. 5. The creed may be seen in Socrat. *H. E.* II. 10. Athanas. *de Synod.*

Arim. et Seleuc. §. 23. p. 735. Hilar. *de Synod.* 28. p. 1168.

^e *Acta Luciani.*

and some of his officers^f; but the result was as might be expected, he was exposed to excruciating torture, and then thrown into prison, where he lingered for some time and died.

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The sufferings of the Christians in other parts of the empire were extremely great. Eusebius says that they even felt them more severely than those of the nine preceding years^g. Silvanus, who had been bishop of Emesa in Phœnicia for forty years, was thrown to wild beasts, with two companions^h. It was perhaps at this time that a whole town in Phrygia was burnt by the soldiers, all the inhabitants and the magistrates having declared themselves to be Christiansⁱ. But no martyrdom excited more attention than that of Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who, as we have seen, had returned to his city when the edict of Galerius was issued; and upon the revival of the persecution, he was suddenly seized by the express order of Maximinus and beheaded^k. It was now that Antony the monk returned to his former solitary life, and exercised himself more than ever in ascetical mortifications^l. It is probable that Hierocles was still the governor of Egypt, who had shewn from the first such determined opposition to the Christians. The governor of the Thebaid at this time was Culcianus, who was another favourite of the tyrant, and whose hands were imbrued in the blood of several martyrs^m. Many other Egyptian bishops suffered with Peter,

^f Eus. *H. E.* VIII. 13. IX. 6. 13. p. 394. IX. 6.

^g *H. E.* IX. 6.

^h *Ib.* VIII. 13. p. 394. IX. 6. p. 832.

ⁱ *Ib.* VIII. 11. Lactant. *Instit.* V. 11.

^m Eus. *H. E.* IX. ult. p. 460.

Epiphan. *Hær.* LXVIII. 1.

^k *Ib.* VII. ult. p. 373. VIII. p. 717.

A. D. 312. and the see continued vacant a twelvemonth, when it was filled up by the election of Achilles, who had been teacher in the school many years beforeⁿ, and must now have been far advanced in life. Meletius still continued to treat his metropolitan with contempt, and there was no prospect of the schism coming to an end. Arius however withdrew himself again from the party; and Achilles, like his predecessor, carried his forgiveness so far that he ordained him presbyter^o; there is even authority for saying, that he appointed him teacher in the catechetical school^p.

The martyrdom of Peter happened at the end of November, 311; and in the course of the winter, not the Christians only, but all the subjects of Maximinus, were exposed to a series of sufferings. The rains, which commonly fell at that season, were withheld; a scarcity of food was the consequence, and a pestilential disease of unusual and frightful malignity was very prevalent^q. It was observed as a singular circumstance, that when Maximinus replied to the petition from Tyre, and granted permission for the persecution of the Christians, he dwelt upon the many indications which the gods had given of their being pleased with the suppression of Christianity. He noticed the healthiness of the season, the abundance of the crops, the absence of pestilence, war, earthquakes, and all the other evils which had been felt so severely while the Christians were tolerated, but which had all been withdrawn when different measures were pursued.

ⁿ Eus. *H. E.* VII. ult. p. 373. Guerike *de Schol. Alex.* p. 86.

^o Sozom. *H. E.* I. 15. ^q Eus. *H. E.* IX. 8.

^p Theodoret. *H. E.* I. 2. See

The edicts which followed this letter had scarcely reached their destinations, when the reverse of this pleasing picture began to be exhibited. While multitudes were dying, or reduced to the extremity of suffering by famine and disease, the difference between the Christians and the heathen was very striking. The former were incessant in attending upon the sick, and supplying the wants of the necessitous; and the result, as on similar occasions, was favourable to the spreading of the Gospel. The absence of the evils of war, which was another topic urged by Maximinus, was totally at variance with facts. Eusebius states that the whole world was in a state of hostility during all the ten years of the persecution^r. Travelling by land or water was attended with the greatest danger; and it could hardly have been otherwise, when so many rival emperors were intriguing against each other. But Maximinus was himself the falsifier of his own words. Early in 312 he marched against the Armenians, and the gods were so far from shewing their approbation of his conduct, that he was defeated in person.

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The Christians in Armenia, if we may follow later and rather suspicious accounts^s, had suffered severely in the earlier years of the persecution. Ath-nogenes, bishop of Sebaste, was memorable among the martyrs^t; and at this time the fame of a bishop named Gregory, was widely spread. He had re-

^r H. E. VIII. 15.

^s See Baronius ad an. 311. No. XX. Sozomen speaks of Armenia having embraced Christianity long before the time of Constantine, II. 8.

^t He was probably the person mentioned by Basil, *de Spir. Sancto*, XXI. 73. p. 62; though Cave supposes him to have lived in 196.

A. D. 312. received his consecration from Leontius, another celebrated bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; and it seems to have been the custom for all his successors to do the same^u. Gregory is said to have converted Tiridates, the king of Armenia, to Christianity; and Arsaces, who reigned after him, was likewise a Christian. It was probably the first of these sovereigns, who provoked the hostility of Maximinus. No cause of war is assigned^x, except the attempts made by the tyrant to force the Armenian Christians to sacrifice; and the result of the campaign was unfavourable to the Romans. Maximinus was perhaps diverted from continuing this war by the necessity of watching the operations of his colleagues in Europe.

Though Maxentius had caused Alexander to be killed in the preceding year, and had nominally got possession of Africa, he did not celebrate his triumph for this victory till 312. He then sent an order to stop the persecution of the Christians; and such a measure was perhaps politic, when hostilities had begun between himself and Constantine, and the latter had entered Italy with an army. I have mentioned that Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, had died shortly before the end of the persecution; and that his place was filled up by Cæcilianus. This appointment led to a most unfortunate schism in the church of Carthage, which lasted for a very long period^y. Two other presbyters, named Botrus and

^u Niconis *de Armen. Relig.* (Biblioth. Patr. ed. 1677. tom. XXV. p. 328.)

^x Eus. *H. E.* IX. 8.

^y The facts which I have mentioned, connected with the

origin of Donatism, will be found in Optatus, *cont. Parmen.* lib. I. Augustin. *Collat. Gesta* apud Zenophilum, *Routh. Rel. Sacr.* vol. IV. p. 100.

Celeusius, had wished to fill the vacant see; and with a view to this, they had caused the election to be made at a meeting of only the neighbouring bishops, without any notice being sent to the bishops of Numidia. The result was contrary to their expectation; for the choice fell unanimously upon Cæcilianus, who was consecrated bishop of Carthage by Felix, bishop of the neighbouring city of Aptungis. The list of articles belonging to the church, which had been made by Mensurius when he was summoned before the magistrate, was now delivered to Cæcilianus, who sent to demand them from the persons with whom they were deposited. These persons did not wish to give them up; and they found the rejected candidates for the bishopric, as well as other members of the church, who had previously opposed Mensurius, willing to join them in a schism against the authority of Cæcilianus. They were also supported by a lady named Lucilla, who was offended with the bishop for something which he had done to her while he was a deacon, and who was able to further their schemes by command of a large sum of money. One of the principal leaders of this faction was Donatus, called from his residence *a casis nigris*, who gave name to the schism of the Donatists, which had its origin in the manner which I have now described.

Their first act was to denounce the election of Cæcilianus as invalid to Secundus, bishop of Tigris, on the ground that the Numidian bishops had not been present, and that the bishop had not been consecrated by Secundus, the primate of Numidia. This brought Secundus and nearly seventy other bishops to Carthage, who avoided holding commu-

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nion with Cæcilianus, and summoned him to attend a meeting, where his case should be investigated. Cæcilianus declined attending, and the council, as it styled itself, proceeded to annul his election. They brought two charges against him. The first was, that he had been consecrated by *traditores*, i. e. by bishops who had delivered up something belonging to the church during the persecution: the second was, that while he was a deacon, he had hindered relief being conveyed to the Christians who were in prison. The first of these charges was the more extraordinary, because it was notorious that Secundus, and the other bishops who attended the council of Circa in 305, (many of whom were now present at Carthage,) had confessed themselves *traditores*. Cæcilianus offered to be consecrated again in the presence of these bishops, if it could be proved that his former consecration was invalid: and it was shewn to be the custom for the bishop of Carthage to be consecrated by a bishop of one of the nearest sees, and not by a bishop of Numidia; in the same manner as the bishop of Rome was consecrated by the bishop of Ostia. The council took no notice of these arguments or proposals, but proceeded, in defiance of all precedent, and to the destruction of ecclesiastical discipline, to elect another bishop for the see of Carthage. Their choice fell upon Majorinus, who stood upon the interest of Lucilla, and received his consecration from Silvanus, bishop of Circa, who, from being one of the *traditores*, was not competent to assist in such a ceremony. From this time the Donatists, as they were afterwards called, continued for several years to elect a bishop of their own; though, as we shall

see presently, Cæcilianus and his successors were recognised by the catholic church as the legitimate bishops of Carthage. A. D.
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Such was the origin of Donatism in the year 312, not long before the important support which was given to the cause of Christianity by the victory of Constantine over Maxentius. I have mentioned, that Maximinus had for some time been carrying on a secret correspondence with Maxentius, and urging him to hostilities with Constantine. The latter appears to have marched with an army into Italy before the end of the year 311, and he had evidently no other object than to possess himself of the capital, and to free the Romans from the tyrant who was oppressing them. Maxentius was not deficient in preparations; and though he stayed in the city, from a superstitious compliance with some prediction, his generals contrived to keep the invaders in check; and in the month of October 312, both armies were opposed to each other under the walls of Rome. It was now that the interposition of Heaven is said to have been witnessed by Constantine, in a manner which has furnished much ground for discussion to the incredulous and the sceptic. Whatever we may think of the reality of the miracle, it must not be set aside as an invention of a later age, nor as a story which cannot be traced to any authentic witness. It is related by Eusebius^y, a contemporary historian, who tells us that he had it from Constantine himself under the sanction of an oath. It was shortly before the decisive battle^z that

^y De Vit. Constant. I. 28, tantius, (*de Mort. Pers.* c. 44.)
&c. who is not contradicted by Eu-

^z The time is fixed by Lac-sebius, though the latter has

A. D. 312. the preternatural communication was made. The father of Constantine, as I have already observed, had decidedly favoured the Christians, though there is no evidence of his having professed their religion. He appears to have seen through the absurdity of polytheism, and to have learnt from the Christians to have worshipped one God. This was certainly the case with Constantine for some time before his conversion^a: and according to the relation which he gave to Eusebius a long time after, he had been praying to this one spiritual Being, and asking him to reveal himself; when about the middle of the day, and in the presence of the whole army, he saw the figure of a cross, traced in light, and placed above the orb of the sun, with these words near it, *Conquer by this*. The emperor and his army, as might be supposed, were astounded at this vision; and in the following night Jesus Christ appeared to Constantine with the same figure of the cross, and told him to make a copy of what he had seen, and use it in his combat with the enemy. From this time the imperial standards bore a device, which was composed of the two first letters of the name of Christ in Greek, which were so placed as to represent a cross^b.

Such is the celebrated story of the appearance of the cross to Constantine: and the remarks made above will shew, that, if there was nothing miraculous, Constantine was either deceived, or was him-

been quoted as placing the event earlier. The testimony of Artemius (*apud Metaphrast.* d. 20 Octobr.) agrees with Lactantius. Others have laid

the scene in France.

^a Eus. *de Vit. Const.* I. 17, 28.

^b The device seems to have been of this kind ✠.

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self the deceiver. If we adopt the former hypothesis, the Christians in his army may have been the guilty persons: and modern experiments have been brought to shew, that the effect might be produced by an optical illusion. Whether the Christians in the fourth century were likely to be masters of this secret, so as to practise it upon the whole army; or whether they would have hazarded the experiment, when a failure would have been so fatal to their cause, might furnish matter for rational inquiry: but the notion of an optical illusion might also be maintained by our supposing the spectators to have witnessed a natural phenomenon, which is not very uncommon in the heavens^c. If we adopt the second hypothesis, the whole story was probably an invention of Constantine. He could not have leagued with the Christians to produce the delusion, because this would imply that he was already converted to their religion, whereas all history is opposed to such a notion; we should therefore conclude, that the cross in the heavens was never really seen, but that Constantine imposed upon the credulity of Eusebius. The latter informs us, that the emperor gave him the account a long time after the event: but this does not perhaps invalidate the testimony. Length of time might cause a person to forget what he had seen; but it could hardly cause him to fancy that he had seen what never really occurred. If it be said, that the emperor waited till the persons who

^c This notion is maintained at some length by Fabricius, *Biblioth. Gr.* vol. VI. p. 8, where the reader may find all the authorities concerning this story. For modern writers, who have discussed it, see Mosheim *de Rebus ante Const. Sæc.* III. §. 7. p. 978.

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were with him at the time were likely to be dead, it might be replied, that in that case he would not have added that the whole army witnessed the phenomenon. Constantine was in his thirty-eighth year, when the cross is said to have appeared to him; and there must have been in his army many persons younger than himself, who were alive when Eusebius published this account; but there is no evidence of any of them having contradicted the facts which are stated^d. I do not see that the writer of history is called upon to give his opinion in a case like the present; but after impartially reviewing all the evidence, I should be inclined to say thus much: that if Constantine had told Eusebius that the cross had been seen only by himself, I should not have ventured to admit the truth of his narration; but when he asserted that the same sight had been witnessed by the whole army, it is difficult to believe that he wilfully invented a falsehood which was so certain to be detected.

Eusebius adds^e, that immediately after the vision he sent for some Christians, who explained to him what he had seen, and instructed him in the mysteries of their religion; which is a proof, that up to this time he had not been converted. The emblem of the cross was then ordered to be made, and to be carried with the army. The defeat and death of

^d The Acts of Artemius are extant, (*apud Metaphrast.* d. 20 Octobr.) who was deprived of his appointment by Julian the Apostate; and he speaks of the cross having been seen by himself and by many persons who were still serving

in the army. But the authority of this document may be doubted. Leatantius mentions the vision in the night, but not the appearance of the cross. *De Mort. Pers.* c. 44. See Photius *Cod.* 256.

^e *De Vit. Constant.* I. 32.

Maxentius shortly followed, and Constantine entered the city amidst the acclamations of the people, who rejoiced to be freed from the licentious cruelties of the usurper. He had a statue erected to himself, with a cross in his right hand, and an inscription which ascribed the liberation of the city to that saving emblem^f. Nothing is said of any surprise being exhibited at Rome at this altered conduct of the government toward the Christians. It is plain that the minds of men were nearly prepared for the change which was shortly to be made in the national religion: and Constantine's conduct to the Christians from this time was marked by a succession of favours and indulgences. He stayed in Rome about three months, and made himself so popular with the inhabitants, that the senate passed a decree for placing his name before that of the other emperors, though Maximinus had taken that honour to himself. At the beginning of the following year he went to Milan, where he was joined by Licinius, and preparations were made for the marriage of the latter with Constantine's half-sister Constantia. From this place an edict was published in both their names, which gave the most perfect toleration to the Christians, though it does not appear to have shewn any preference to their religion. It was in fact an edict for allowing to every sect the exercise of its own religion, though some conditions were specified, of which we do not know the precise nature^g: and permission was expressly given for the Christians to hold their meetings and erect churches^h.

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^f Eus. *H. E.* IX. 9. p. 452. compared with Lactant. c. 48. *de Vit. Const.* I. 40.

^h Eus. *H. E.* IX. 9. p. 455.

^g Eus. *H. E.* X. 5. p. 481. X. 5. p. 482.

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Copies of this decree were sent to Maximinus, who had already heard of what had passed at Rome. It was plain that hostilities could not long be delayed: but since it was his interest not to have the Christians against him in the conflict, he thought it best, without taking any notice of the late edict, to publish orders, as if proceeding from himself, which should appear favourable to the Christians. Accordingly he wrote a letter to Sabinus, (the same person whom he had employed in a similar act of dissimulation in the year preceding,) in which he spoke of the necessity which the emperors had felt of maintaining the old religion, and of the efforts which he had himself made to mitigate the severity of the laws. He mentioned the petitions which had been addressed to him by certain cities against the Christians, and the obligation which he had felt of complying with them: but he now gave orders, that no force should be used for bringing men back to the old religion. Arguments and persuasions were to be employed: but, if the persons continued obstinate, they were not to be molestedⁱ. This letter must have been written a very short time before Maximinus threw off the mask, and put himself at the head of his army to face his opponents. Before the winter was over, he marched into Bithynia, and without stopping there he crossed the straits and sat down before Byzantium. Licinius now hurried from Milan, and came up to him, though with a very inferior force, while the army was encamped between Heraclea and Adrianople. The sincerity with which Maximinus wrote his letter to Sabinus, may be seen

ⁱ Eus. *H. E.* IX. 9. p. 452.

by his now making a vow to Jupiter, in which he promised, if he gained the victory, utterly to extirpate the Christian name^k. The decisive battle was fought on the first of May: and Maximinus, after sustaining a total defeat, fled as a private soldier to Nicomedia, and from thence into Cappadocia. Licianus followed with his army, and while he was halting at Nicomedia, he published on the thirteenth of June a still more favourable edict for the Christians than that which had been issued at Milan. The terms of it had probably been settled between himself and Constantine before he marched against Maximinus; and we may conclude that a similar edict had already been published by Constantine in Italy. It removed the conditions, whatever they may have been, which had accompanied the former act of toleration; and instead of merely allowing the Christians to hold their meetings and erect churches, it expressly provided, that if any person had bought or received as a gift any building which had belonged to the Christians, he should restore it to them, and receive an indemnification from the government^l.

Maximinus in the mean time had revenged himself for his defeat by putting to death many of the heathen priests, who had encouraged him by the answers of pretended oracles: and convinced at length of the mistake which he had made in persecuting the Christians, he published an edict, which gave them complete toleration. It was in fact a copy in all its provisions, of that which the two other emperors had lately put forth^m; and must have fol-

^k Lactant. c. 46.

^l Eus. *H. E.* X. 5. Lactant. c. 48.

^m Eus. *H. E.* IX. 10. p. 456.

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lowed shortly after that which Licinius had published from Nicomedia. Maximinus however found it too late to retrace his steps. He was obliged to continue his flight before the victorious Licinius; and after trying in vain to make a stand in the fastnesses of mount Taurus, he threw himself into Tarsus, where he died by poison in the month of August. It is to be regretted that the cruelties, which attach to the name of Maximinus, were not suffered to end with his death. It is perhaps true, that he had put very unworthy persons into places of importance; and it was not to be expected that the governors of cities or provinces, who had seconded the tyrant in all his enormities, should now be continued in office: but the Christian reader will wish that their lives had been spared. Such, however, was not the policy of the conqueror. Many favourites of Maximinus were put to death. Even his son, who was only seven years old, and his daughter, who was a year younger, were not suffered to escape. His wife perhaps deserved her fate: at least it was a just retribution, when she was drowned in the same stream in which several Christian females had been drowned by her ordersⁿ. Licinius himself, when he was at Antioch, put Theotecnus to the torture, and several persons who had assisted him in imposing upon the people by some miraculous image of Jupiter^o. They were all put to death, as was Picentius, who had been several times consul, and the confidential adviser of Maximinus; and Culcianus, whose name has been already mentioned, as a persecutor of the Christians in Egypt.

ⁿ Lactant. c. 50.

^o Eus. *H. E.* IX. 2, 3. 11.

While Licinius was executing this severe vengeance upon his enemies, Constantine was engaged in A. D.
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^p Eus. *H. E.* X. 5. p. 483.^q *Ib.* 6.

A. D. draw for more upon the emperor's private treasurer.
313. Even the internal affairs of the church did not remain unnoticed. In his letter to Cæcilianus, Constantine alluded to the troublesome conduct of certain persons who differed from the catholic church, by which he evidently intended the Donatists: and it is worthy of remark, that the term *catholic* is henceforth applied to the church in all public documents.

The payment of this money appears to have been made to the African clergy only: but another letter, which was written shortly after to Anulinus, concerned most probably the whole body of the clergy. The proconsul was instructed to announce to the bishop of Carthage, that all persons engaged in the sacred ministry were to be excused from the burden of any public office^r. This letter was written from Milan in the month of March or April, when Constantine was on the point of setting out for Gaul; and Anulinus lost no time in communicating its contents to Cæcilianus. He seems to have been aware of the schism in the church of Carthage, and coupled his communication with an exhortation to unity; but unfortunately it was of little avail. Within a few days a meeting was held of the persons who supported Majorinus, and they agreed to petition the proconsul, that the immunity granted by Constantine to all the clergy might be extended to themselves. Constantine had expressly named the clergy of the catholic church, over which Cæcilianus presided: but the Donatists attached another meaning to the catholic church, and sent two papers

^r Eus. H. E. X. 7.

to the proconsul, one of which contained a series of charges against Cæcilianus, and the other was an address to the emperor, requesting him to send some bishops out of Gaul, who might settle the dispute between the two parties^s. Amulinus forwarded these papers to the emperor, who appears to have been very anxious for putting an end to the schism. He accordingly ordered Cæcilianus, with ten bishops of his own party, and ten bishops of the opposite party, to go to Rome: and not satisfied with corresponding upon this subject with the proconsul, he wrote in person to Melchiades, bishop of Rome, acquainting him with his intentions concerning Cæcilianus^t. At the same time he wrote letters to three Gallic bishops, Rheticius^u of Autun, Maternus of Cologne, and Marinus of Arles, as well as to some Italian bishops, desiring them to go to Rome, where the rival bishops of Carthage might have their case decided in a full and impartial council.

Fifteen Italian bishops joined the three from Gaul and the bishop of Rome in forming this council, which was held in the month of October. Cæcilianus, with the twenty African bishops of both parties attended, Donatus still taking the lead on the part of the schismatics. The council at length decided, that the election of Cæcilianus was perfectly regular, and that none of the charges had been proved against him: it was added, however, that the bishops who had condemned him, and who were now come to accuse him, were not to be ex-

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^s August. *Epist.* LXXXVIII. 1. p. 213. XCIII. 13. p. 235. CXXX. 4. p. 381. *Brevic. Collat. dici* III. c. 7. 12.

^t Eus. *H. E.* X. 5. p. 484.

Augustin. *Collat.* l. c.

^u He was an author of some celebrity. Hieron. *Catal. Script.* Augustin. *cont. Julian.* I. 3. vol. X. p. 500.

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cluded from communion. Donatus alone, as the chief promoter of the schism, was excepted from this charitable decision. The other bishops, even though they had been consecrated by Majorinus, were allowed to retain their rank, if they would return to the unity of the church^x. This sentence was decisive, and the Donatists have from that time been always considered as schismatics. Cæcilianus did not immediately return to Carthage, but stayed some time at Brescia. In the mean while two bishops were sent to Carthage by the council, who, after carefully weighing the evidence upon the spot, decided in favour of Cæcilianus, and held communion with the clergy of his party. The bishop then returned to his city, where he found Donatus already arrived before him; and though a definitive sentence had been passed, the schism was carried on as openly as before. A still further triumph was furnished to Cæcilianus, when Constantine wrote to the proconsul, and ordered him to examine the charges which had been brought against Felix, bishop of Aptungis. This was the only shadow which remained of any grounds for questioning the ordination of Cæcilianus; and after an impartial investigation it was proved, that Felix had never delivered up the books of the church, and that there was no impediment to his administering ordination^y. There is reason to think that many of the clergy, after their sentence, were reconciled with Cæcilianus, though others continued their oppo-

^x Augustin. *Epist.* CLXXXV. *Collat. dici* III. *Optat.* I. 22—
27.

^y *Optat. de Schism. Donat.*

I. 27. *Gesta purgationis Felicis* apud Routh. *Rel. Sacr.* vol. IV. p. 71.

sition, and appealed again to Constantine. This led to a still more numerous council being assembled in the following year : but before we consider the result of this appeal, we may pause to make a few remarks upon the general aspect of affairs at this important period of ecclesiastical history.

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The longest and severest persecution, which the Christians had ever sustained, was now suddenly concluded. It had lasted ten years in the East with a few occasional interruptions, while it had hardly been felt in Europe beyond the two first years. The difference seems to be attributable to nothing but the will of the emperors. We are not to assume, that the Christians were more numerous in the West, or that they were more generally unpopular in the East. In Italy and Africa, while they were governed by Constantius and Constantine, the persecution was hardly felt : but it raged almost incessantly in Asia and Egypt, which were subject to Galerius and Maximinus. It is Maximinus himself who tells us^z, that almost the whole world had abandoned the worship of the gods, and gone over to the Christians. Such was the state of religion at the beginning of the fourth century ; and we have seen that in the interval of fifty years which followed the Decian persecution, the Christians had been raised to places of eminence in every department of the state. The prejudice against them seems gradually to have worn away ; and pagans and Christians were in the habit of meeting each other in the daily intercourse of life. This could only end in the final abandonment of heathen-

^z Apud Eus. *H. E.* IX. 9. p. 453.

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Mischief of a different kind arose out of the long interval of peace which followed the Decian persecution. I have mentioned the remark of Eusebius, that the clergy and their flocks had become exceedingly corrupt. This may account for so many persons lapsing in the time of trial. Others perhaps had been instructed very imperfectly in the doctrines of the Gospel; and though they no longer

worshipped idols, they were Christians in little else than in name. The fiery trial of ten years would naturally purify the church from these corrupt or useless members : and if we were to fix upon any time since the days of the Apostles, when the lives of Christians were likely to win the hearts of the heathen, it would probably be the time when the death of Maximinus placed the whole of the empire at the disposal of Constantine. The conversion of this emperor to the Christian faith was undoubtedly a most favourable circumstance ; but it was the consequence, as well as the cause, of the wide extension of the Gospel. The example set by the court would of course be generally followed, and especially by the higher orders : but Constantine found his subjects almost prepared for the change which was now made, and the establishment of Christianity as the national religion could not have been long delayed.

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*Chronological Table of the Principal Events of
the Ecclesiastical History of the First
Three Centuries.*

B.C.

4. Jesus Christ born.
2. Herod the Great died.

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8. Archelaus banished. Quirinius sent to levy the tax in Judæa. Insurrection of Judas of Galilee.
14. Augustus died, August 19. Tiberius succeeded.
19. Jews expelled from Rome.
23. Jews again expelled from Rome.
26. Pontius Pilate appointed procurator of Judæa.
31. Jews allowed to return to Rome.
Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
Appointment of the Seven Deacons shortly before the Feast of Tabernacles.
Death of Stephen. Conversion of Saul.
Meeting between S. Peter and Simon Magus in Samaria.
32. Saul in Arabia.
James the Just appointed bishop of Jerusalem. Elders appointed.
Conversion of Cornelius.
33. Saul returns to Damascus. Goes from thence to Jerusalem; and from thence to Tarsus.
36. Pontius Pilate banished. Judæa annexed to Syria.
37. Tiberius died, March 16. Caligula succeeded.
Herod Agrippa made king of his uncle Philip's territories. Herod Antipas banished, and Galilee given to Herod Agrippa.
39. Caligula orders his statue to be erected in the temple at Jerusalem.

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41. Caligula killed, January 24. Claudius succeeded.
42. Barnabas brings Saul from Tarsus to Antioch.
Name of *Christians* first used at Antioch.
44. Famine in Judæa. Saul and Barnabas go with contributions to Jerusalem.
James the son of Zebedee killed. Peter imprisoned.
Herod Agrippa dies. Cuspius Fadus made procurator.
45. Paul and Barnabas take their first journey, and return to Antioch.
Tiberius Alexander, procurator of Judæa.
46. Council at Jerusalem.
Evodius, bishop of Antioch.
Paul sets out on his second journey with Silas; winters at Corinth.
47. Paul at Corinth; writes his two Epistles to the Thessalonians.
48. Paul leaves Corinth, visits Jerusalem, and comes to Ephesus.
Agrippa (son of Herod Agrippa) made king of Chalcis, with the superintendence of the Temple.
Cumanus and Felix appointed procurators of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee.
51. Paul visits Crete; leaves Titus there, and returns to Ephesus; writes his Epistles to Titus and the Galatians.
52. Paul writes his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Riot in the theatre. Paul leaves Ephesus; writes his first Epistle to Timothy; traverses Macedonia, writes his second Epistle to the Corinthians, and winters at Corinth.
Claudius gives Trachonitis to Agrippa, instead of his other territories.
Egyptian impostor in Judæa.
53. Paul writes his Epistle to the Romans, leaves Corinth, goes to Jerusalem, and is imprisoned at Cæsarea.
Felix sole procurator of Judæa.
54. Claudius poisoned, October 13. Nero succeeded.

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54. Nero gives Galilee and Peræa to Agrippa.
Luke wrote his Gospel.
55. Festus succeeds Felix as procurator of Judæa.
Paul sails for Rome, winters in Melite.
56. Paul arrives at Rome ; writes his Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and the Philippians.
Luke writes the Acts of the Apostles.
58. Paul leaves Rome ; writes his Epistle to the Hebrews.
Peter visits Rome, and goes from thence to Egypt.
Linus, bishop of Rome.
Mark writes his Gospel.
Peter writes his first Epistle.
James, bishop of Jerusalem, writes his Epistle.
62. Albinus succeeds Festus as procurator of Judæa.
James, bishop of Jerusalem, killed. Symeon succeeds.
Death of Mark ; Annianus succeeds as bishop of Alexandria.
64. Burning of Rome. Christians persecuted.
65. Florus succeeds Albinus as procurator of Judæa.
66. Jewish war broke out. Christians retire to Pella.
Matthew writes his Gospel.
Epistle of Jude.
67. Paul goes to Rome ; writes his second Epistle to Timothy.
Peter writes his second Epistle, and goes to Rome.
68. Peter and Paul killed.
Linus killed. Anencletus succeeds as bishop of Rome.
Nero dies, June 9. Galba, Otho, Vitellius.
69. Vespasian made emperor, July 1.
70. Ignatius succeeds Evodius as bishop of Antioch, v. 46.
72. Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.
Rise of the Ebionites and Nazarenes.
79. Vespasian died, June 24. Titus succeeded.
81. Titus died, September 13. Domitian succeeded.
82. Abilius succeeded Annianus as bishop of Alexandria, v. 62.
Cerinthians and Nicolaitans, heretics.
93. Clement succeeded Anencletus as bishop of Rome, v. 68.

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93. Persecution: Acilius Glabrio and Flavius Clemens suffer at Rome. John banished to Patmos; wrote his Revelations.
96. Domitian died, September 18. Nerva succeeded. John returns to Ephesus. Wrote his Gospel and Epistles.
97. Cerdo succeeded Abilius as bishop of Alexandria, v. 82.
98. Nerva died, January 27. Trajan succeeded.
100. Evarestus succeeded Clement as bishop of Rome, v. 93.
104. Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, martyred. Justus succeeded, v. 62.
Elxai joins the Ebionites.
107. Trajan sets out for Parthia, and stops at Antioch. Martyrdom of Ignatius. Heros succeeds as bishop of Antioch.
109. Alexander succeeds Evarestus as bishop of Rome.
110. Pliny goes to Bithynia as proprætor.
111. Trajan returns to Rome.
Pliny writes to Trajan, and persecutes in Bithynia.
112. Zacchæus succeeds Justus as bishop of Jerusalem.
114. Insurrection of the Jews in Egypt and Cyrene. Basilides, a leader of the Gnostics at Alexandria, and Saturninus at Antioch.
116. Nystus succeeds Alexander as bishop of Rome.
117. Trajan dies, August 10. Hadrian succeeds.
119. Ælia Capitolina built on the site of Jerusalem. Aquila translates the Jewish Scriptures into Greek.
120. Hadrian visits Alexandria.
Justus succeeds Primus as bishop of Alexandria.
121. Martyrdom of Symphorosa and her sons.
122. Hadrian visits Athens. Apologies presented to him by Quadratus and Aristides.
125. Hadrian writes to M. Fundanus, proconsul of Asia, concerning the Christians.
129. Hadrian writes to Servianus, the consul, mentioning the Christians.

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129. Cornelius succeeds Heros as bishop of Antioch.
Telesphorus succeeds Xystus as bishop of Rome.
131. Perpetual edict issued.
Eumenes succeeds Justus as bishop of Alexandria.
132. Revolt of the Jews under Barcochebas.
Justin Martyr leaves Palestine.
135. Bitherra taken. End of the Jewish war.
Marcus, the first Gentile bishop of Jerusalem.
138. Hadrian dies July 10. Antoninus Pius succeeds.
Telesphorus, bishop of Rome, martyred. Hyginus
succeeds; while he was bishop (138-142) Valen-
tinus and Cerdon, leaders of the Gnostics, came
to Rome.
141. Heros succeeds Cornelius as bishop of Antioch.
142. Marcion, a leader of the Gnostics, came to Rome.
Pius succeeds Hyginus as bishop of Rome.
143. Marcus succeeds Eumenes as bishop of Alexandria.
148. Justin Martyr presented his First Apology to Anto-
ninus.
153. Celadion succeeds Marcus as bishop of Alexandria.
156. Anicetus succeeds Pius as bishop of Rome.
158. Polycarp visits Rome.
Hegesippus flourishes.
161. Antoninus Pius died, March 7. Marcus Aurelius
succeeds.
Cassianus succeeds Marcus as bishop of Jerusalem.
Justin Martyr presented his Second Apology in this
reign.
163. Death of Papias.
165. Death of Justin Martyr.
Death of Peregrinus, mentioned by Lucian.
166. Tatian founded the sect of the Encratites.
Apology of Athenagoras, or in 177.
Bardesanes flourished.
167. Martyrdom of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna.
168. Soter succeeds Anicetus as bishop of Rome.
Agrippinus succeeds Celadion as bishop of Alexandria.
Theophilus succeeds Heros as bishop of Antioch.

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168. Montanus began his heresy.
173. Eleutherus succeeds Soter as bishop of Rome.
174. Miracle of the Thundering Legion.
175. Insurrection of Avidius Cassius in Syria.
177. Persecution at Lyons. Pothinus, the bishop, martyred; succeeded by Irenæus.
Apology of Athenagoras, or in 166.
180. Theophilus writes his work to Autolycus.
M. Aurelius dies, March 17. Commodus succeeds.
Irenæus writes his great work against the Gnostics in this reign.
Apology of Miltiades.
181. Julianus succeeds Agrippinus as bishop of Alexandria.
Maximinus succeeds Theophilus as bishop of Antioch.
183. The Empress Crispina banished. Marcia, the mistress of Commodus, favours the Christians.
184. Maximus, bishop of Jerusalem.
Apollonius, senator of Rome, martyred.
Theodotion translates the Jewish Scriptures into Greek.
186. Philip, governor of Egypt, said to be a Christian.
188. Demetrius succeeds Julianus as bishop of Alexandria.
Pantæus goes to India. Succeeded in the catechetical school of Alexandria by Clement.
189. Victor succeeds Eleutherus as bishop of Rome.
Serapion succeeds Maximinus as bishop of Antioch.
192. Commodus killed, December 31. Septimius Severus succeeds.
196. Byzantium taken. Theodotus goes to Rome; excommunicated by Victor for denying Christ to be God. His notions adopted by Artemas.
198. Victor quarrels with the Asiatic Churches about the paschal festival.
Heresy of Praxeas concerning the personality of the Son.
Rhodon flourishes.
Tertullian's Apology, or in 205.
199. Tertullian became a Montanist.
201. Zephyrinus succeeds Victor as bishop of Rome.

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- 201. Severus visits Alexandria. Persecution begins.
- 202. Leonides, the father of Origen, martyred, leaving his son seventeen years old.
Clement leaves Alexandria.
Symmachus translates the Jewish Scriptures into
* Greek.
- 203. Persecution continues in Egypt. Severus returns to Rome.
- 204. Secular games celebrated at Rome.
Alexander, a Cappadocian bishop, imprisoned.
Jude writes concerning Antichrist.
- 205. Tertullian's Apology, or in 198.
- 207. Tertullian writes against Marcion.
- 208. Severus and his sons go into Britain.
- 211. Severus dies at York, February 4. Caracalla and Geta succeed.
Asclepiades succeeds Serapion as bishop of Antioch.
- 212. Caracalla kills his brother Geta.
- 213. Origen went to Rome and returned to Alexandria.
- 214. Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem.
Origen sent for to Arabia.
- 215. Massacre at Alexandria by Caracalla. Origen went to Cæsarea in Palestine.
Council of Carthage under Agrippinus concerning baptism administered by heretics.
- 217. Caracalla killed, April 8. Macrinus succeeds.
Philetus succeeds Asclepiades as bishop of Antioch.
- 218. Macrinus killed, June 3. Elagabalus succeeds.
Mammæa sends for Origen to Antioch, or in 229.
Callistus succeeds Zephyrinus as bishop of Rome.
- 219. Elagabalus establishes the worship of the sun at Rome.
- 222. Elagabalus killed, March 6. Alexander succeeds.
Urbanus succeeds Callistus as bishop of Rome.
- 229. Alexander goes to Persia.
Mammæa sends for Origen to Antioch, or in 218.
Origen ordained at Cæsarea; goes into Greece.
Zebinus succeeds Philetus as bishop of Antioch.

A. D.

230. Pontianus succeeds Urbanus as bishop of Rome.

231. Origen returns to Alexandria. Councils held against him by Demetrius.

He finally leaves Alexandria, and settles at Cæsarea.
Becomes acquainted with Firmilianus, Athenodorus, and Theodorus.

Council held at Iconium concerning baptism administered by heretics.

232. Heraclas succeeds Demetrius as bishop of Alexandria.

235. Alexander killed, March 14. Maximinus succeeded. Persecution.

Origen retires to Cappadocia; begins his Hexapla.

238. Maximinus killed in March. Gordian succeeds.

Origen visits Greece.

Anteros succeeds Pontianus as bishop of Rome. Fabianus succeeds Anteros.

239. Origen returns to Cæsarea.

Babylas succeeds Zebinus as bishop of Antioch.

240. Gregory (Thaumaturgus,) bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus, flourishes.

Beryllus, bishop of Bostra in Arabia, confounds the persons of the Trinity; convinced of his error by Origen.

Council of ninety bishops at Carthage: Privatus condemned.

Manes, or Manichæus, born.

244. Gordian killed in May by Philip, who succeeds to the empire.

245. Plotinus, the Platonic philosopher, settles in Rome.

247. Philip celebrates the secular games.

Dionysius succeeds Heraclas as bishop of Alexandria;
Pierius succeeds to the catechetical school.

248. Christians persecuted at Alexandria.

Cyprian succeeds Donatus as bishop of Carthage.
His election opposed by Novatus.

249. Philip killed in July by Decius, who succeeds to the empire.

250. Decius issues an edict for persecution.

Fabianus, bishop of Rome, martyred; see vacant.

A. D.

250. Origen thrown into prison.
 Cyprian obliged to leave Carthage.
 Mazabanes succeeds Alexander as bishop of Jerusalem.
 Fabius succeeds Babylas as bishop of Antioch.
 Paul, the hermit, retires to the deserts in Egypt.
251. Schism at Carthage. Cyprian returns, holds a council,
 and settles the question of the lapsed.
 Cornelius elected bishop of Rome; opposed by Novatian. Novatus goes to Rome.
 Council held at Rome: Novatian condemned.
 Decius killed in December. Gallus succeeds.
252. Council at Carthage of sixty-six bishops.
 Council at Antioch. Demetrianus succeeds Fabius in that see.
 Pestilence begins, which lasted fifteen years.
 Persecution renewed by Gallus.
 Council at Carthage of forty-one bishops.
 Cornelius, bishop of Rome, martyred in September.
 Lucius succeeds.
 Invasion of the Goths, &c. War with Persia begins.
253. Lucius, bishop of Rome, martyred in March. Stephen succeeds.
 Gallus killed in May. Valerian succeeds.
 Persecution stopped.
254. Death of Origen.
 Marcianus, bishop of Arles, deposed for Novatianism.
 Basilides and Martialis, Spanish bishops, deposed.
254. Controversy between Cyprian and Stephen concerning baptism administered by heretics. Council at Carthage decides against it.
256. Another Council at Carthage.
257. Valerian commences a persecution.
 Stephen, bishop of Rome, martyred. Xystus succeeds.
 Cyprian banished to Curubis.
258. Sabellius spreads his doctrines. Dionysius writes against them.
 Macrianus renews the persecution. Dionysius banished to Cephron. Xystus martyred, and his deacon Laurentius. Cyprian martyred.

A. D.

259. Valerian taken prisoner in Persia. Gallienus succeeds.
Gallienus stops the persecution.
Dionysius made bishop of Rome.
260. Paul of Samosata succeeds Demetrianus as bishop of Antioch.
261. Macrianus killed. Persecution stopped everywhere.
Theognostus succeeds Pierius in the catechetical school of Alexandria.
Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, accused of holding erroneous notions concerning the divinity of Christ.
262. Dionysius publishes his refutation and defence.
Nepos maintains the doctrine of a millennium; opposed by Dionysius.
Porphyry came to Rome.
264. Hymenæus succeeded Mazabanes as bishop of Jerusalem.
265. First council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata for heresy.
Maximus succeeds Dionysius as bishop of Alexandria.
268. Gallienus killed. Claudius succeeds; some accounts make him to have persecuted.
Anatolius and Eusebius distinguish themselves at Alexandria.
269. Second council of Antioch. Paul deposed. Domnus succeeds.
Felix succeeds Dionysius as bishop of Rome.
270. Claudius dies in November. Aurelian succeeds.
Death of Plotinus.
272. Aurelian defeats Zenobia, and completes the deposition of Paul.
274. Eutychianus succeeds Felix as bishop of Rome.
275. Aurelian dies, March 20. Tacitus succeeds, Sept. 25.
276. Probus succeeds to the empire, April 13.
Timæus succeeds Domnus as bishop of Antioch.
277. Death of Manes, or Manichæus.
281. Cyril succeeds Timæus as bishop of Antioch.
282. Probus killed in August. Carus succeeds.
Numerianus stated to have persecuted.
Theonas succeeds Maximus as bishop of Alexandria.

A. D.

283. Caius succeeds Eutychianus as bishop of Rome.
284. Carus dies. Diocletian succeeds, Sept. 17.
286. Maximianus Hercules made emperor.
Miracle of the Theban legion.
Dionysius, bishop of Paris, martyred.
292. Galerius and Constantius made Cæsars.
296. Hierax begins his heresy.
Marcellinus succeeds Caius as bishop of Rome.
298. Persecution in the army.
299. Tyrannus succeeds Cyril as bishop of Antioch.
300. Peter succeeds Theonas as bishop of Alexandria.
303. Persecution begins. Anthimus, bishop of Nicomedia, martyred.
Hierocles writes against the Christians. Lactantius answers.
304. Hercules in Rome. Marcellinus dies.
Galerius persecutes in the East.
305. Diocletian and Hercules abdicate. Constantius and Galerius emperors. Severus and Maximinus Cæsars.
Constantius declines persecuting in Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Italy.
Council of Cirta in Africa.
Council of Illiberis in Spain.
306. Peter, bishop of Alexandria, publishes his canons about the lapsed.
Maximinus persecutes in the East.
Peter leaves Alexandria.
Meletian schism.
Constantius dies at York. Constantine takes the title of Cæsar.
Maxentius declared emperor at Rome. Hercules resumes the empire.
307. Severus marches to Rome, and is killed at Ravenna.
Licinius and Maximinus take the title of emperor.
Alexander takes the title in Africa, and persecutes.
Pamphilus imprisoned at Cæsarea. He and Eusebius write the Defence of Origen.

A. D.

308. Cruelties in Egypt.

Antony retires to the deserts in Egypt.

Marcellus made bishop of Rome.

Persecution relaxes ; renewed by Maximinus.

309. Pamphilus suffers martyrdom.

310. Cruelties in Palestine.

Eusebius writes against Hierocles.

Arnobius writes.

Eusebius succeeds Marcellus as bishop of Rome ; dies,
and is succeeded by Melchiades.

311. Alexander killed in Africa.

Galerius issues an edict for stopping the persecution,
and dies.Peter returns to Alexandria, and excommunicates
Meletius.

Acts of Pilate forged.

Lucianus martyred at Antioch.

Peter suffers martyrdom. Antony returns to his soli-
tary life.

312. Origin of Donatism at Carthage.

Constantine marches against Maxentius. Vision of the
cross.

Defeat and death of Maxentius.

Achillas made bishop of Alexandria.

313. Edict in favour of the Christians.

Defeat and death of Maximinus.

Constantine decides in favour of Cæcilianus at Carthage.
Christianity established.

*Chronological Table of the Bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch,
Rome, and Alexandria.*

	<i>Emperors.</i>	<i>Jerusalem.</i>	<i>Antioch.</i>	<i>Rome.</i>	<i>Alexandria.</i>
32	Tiberius, 19th year.	1 James.			
33					
34					
35					
36					
37	Caligula, March 16.				
38					
39					
40					
41	Claudius, Jan. 24.				
42					
43					
44					
45					
46	.....	.....	1 Evodius.		
47					
48					
49					
50					
51					
52					
53					
54	Nero, Oct. 13.				
55					
56					
57					
58	.....	.....	.....	1 Linus.	1 Mark.
59					
60					
61					
62	.....	2 Symeon . . . .	.....	.....	2 Amnianus.
63					
64					
65					
66					
67					
68	Nero ob. June 9th*.	.....	.....	2 Anencletus.	
69	Vespasian, July 1.	.....	.....
70	.....	.....	2 Ignatius.		
71					
72					
73					
74					
75					

* The chronology of the four successors of Nero is as follows : Galba, emperor April 3rd, 68; died January 15th, 69. Otho, emperor January 15th, 69; died April 16th, 69. Vitellius, emperor January 2, 69; died December 21st, 69. Vespasian, emperor July 1st, 69.

	<i>Emperors.</i>	<i>Jerusalem.</i>	<i>Antioch.</i>	<i>Rome.</i>	<i>Alexandria.</i>
76					
77					
78					
79	Titus, June 24.				
80					
81	Domitian, Sept. 13.				
82					3 Abilius.
83					
84					
85					
86					
87					
88					
89					
90					
91					
92					
93				3 Clemens.	
94					
95					
96	Nerva, Sept. 18.				
97					1 Cerdo.
98	Trajan, January 27.				
99					
100				1 Evarestus.	
101					
102					
103					
104		3 Justus.			
105					
106					
107			3 Hieros.		
108					
109				5 Alexander.	5 Primus.
110					
111					
112		4 Zacchæus.			
113					
114		5 Tobias.			
115					
116		6 Benjamin.			
117	Hadrian, Aug. 10.				
118		7 John.			
119				6 Nystus.	
120		8 Matthias.			6 Justus.
121					
122		9 Philip.			
123					
124					
125		10 Seneca.			
126		11 Justus.			
127					
128		12 Levi.		7 Telesphorus.	
129			4 Cornelius.		
130		13 Ephres.			
131					7 Eumenes.
132		14 Joseph.			
133		15 Judas.			
134					
135		16 Marcus.			
136					

	Emperors.	Jerusalem.	Antioch.	Rome.	Alexandria.
137					
138	Antoni. Pius, July 10.			8 Hyginus.	
139					
140					
141			5 Heros.		
142				9 Pius.	
143					8 Marcus.
144					
145					
146					
147					
148					
149					
150					
151					
152					9 Celadion.
153					
154					
155				10 Anicetus. ?	
156					
157					
158					
159					
160					
161	M. Aurelius, March 7.	17 Cassianus.			
162					
163		18 Publius.			
164					
165					
166		19 Maximianus.			
167					
168		20 Julianus	6 Theophilus. . .	11 Soter.	10 Agrippinus.
169					
170					
171		21 Caius.			
172					
173		22 Symmachus.		12 Eleutherus.	
174					
175					
176		23 Caius.			
177					
178					
179		24 Julianus.			
180	Commodus, Mar. 17.				
181		25 Apion	7 Maximinus		11 Julianus.
182					
183					
184		26 Maximus.			
185					
186					
187		27 Antonius.			
188					
189					
190		28 Valens.	8 Serapion.	13 Victor.	12 Demetrius.
191					
192					
193	Sept. Severus	29 Dulichianus.			
194					
195					

	<i>Emperors.</i>	<i>Jerusalem.</i>	<i>Antioch.</i>	<i>Rome.</i>	<i>Alexandria.</i>
196	.....	30 Narcissus.			
197					
198					
199					
200					
201	.....		.....	14 Zephyrinus.	
202	.....	31 Dius.			
203					
204					
205	.....	32 Germanio.			
206					
207					
208	.....	33 Gordianus.			
209					
210					
211	Caracalla, Feb. 4. ....	.....	9 Asclepiades.		
212					
213					
214	.....	34 Alexander.			
215					
216					
217	Macrinus, April 2. ....	.....	10 Philetus.		
218	Elagabalus, June 3. ....	.....	.....	15 Callistus.	
219					
220					
221					
222	Alex. Severus, Mar. 6. ....	.....	.....	16 Urbanus.	
223					
224					
225					
226					
227					
228					
229	.....		11 Zebinus.		
230	.....		.....	17 Pontianus.	
231					
232					13 Heraclas.
233					
234					
235	Maximinus, Mar. 11.				
236					
237					
238	Gordian.....		.....	{ 18 Anteros. 19 Fabianus.	
239	.....		12 Babylas.		
240					
241					
242					
243					
244	Philip, May.				
245					
246					
247	.....				14 Dionysius.
248					
249	Decius, July.				
250	.....	35 Mazabanes.	13 Fabius.		
251	Gallus, December....	.....		20 Cornelius.	
252			14 Demetrianus.	21 Lucius.	
253	Valerian, May. ....	.....	.....	22 Stephen.	
254					

	Emperors.	Jerusalem.	Antioch.	Rome.	Alexandria.
255					
256					
257				23 Xystus II.	
258					
259	Gallienus			24 Dionysius.	
260			15 Paul.		
261					
262					
263					
264		36 Hymenæus.			
265					15 Maximus.
266					
267					
268	Claudius, March.				
269			16 Domnus	25 Felix.	
270	Aurelian, Nov.				
271					
272					
273					
274				26 Eutychianus.	
275	Tacitus, Sept. 25.				
276	Probus, April 13.		17 Timæus.		
277					
278					
279					
280					
281			18 Cyril.		
282	Carus, August.				16 Theonas.
283				27 Caius.	
284	Diocletian, Sept. 17.				
285					
286	Maximianus.				
287					
288					
289					
290					
291					
292					
293					
294					
295					
296				28 Marcellinus.	
297		37 Zabdas.			
298					
299		38 Hermon	19 Tyrannus.		17 Peter.
300					
301					
302					
303					
304				Marcellinus, ob. Oct.	
305	Galerius, Constantius.				
306	Severus.				
307	Licinius, Maximinus.				
308				29 Marcellus.	
309					
310				{ 30 Eusebius. 31 Melchiades.	
311					Peter, ob. Nov.
312					18 Achilles.

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 ——— Arabia, 313. 316.
 ——— Carthage, I. 264. 352.
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 ——— IV. 340.
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